MENNONITE LIFE

July 1948

Published in the interest of the best in the religious, social, and economic phases of Mennonite culture

Mennonite Life Anniversary Contest

1874 - 1949 — 75 ANNIVERSARY — 1924 - 1949 — 25

Many Mennonite communities of the prairie states and the Canadian provinces will observe the 75th and 25th anniversary of their or their parents' and grandparents' arrival in America. MENNONITE LIFE plans to devote parts of several issues to these anniversaries. To obtain good stories, original photographs, documents, letters, and other materials for publication and exhibit we are offering the following prizes for such contributions:

First prize	$ 25.00
Second prize	$ 15.00
Third prize	$ 10.00
Fourth prize	4 subscriptions
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RULES OF CONTEST

1. All entries — essays, poems, stories, pictures, documents, books, letters — must be related to the pioneer life of Mennonites in the states or the provinces, or the departure from the old country.
2. All entries will be judged by a committee appointed by **Mennonite Life.** Decisions will be final.
3. All entries must be made or postmarked prior to January 1, 1949.
4. All entries become the property of **Mennonite Life.**
5. The results of the contest will be announced in **Mennonite Life,** April, 1949.

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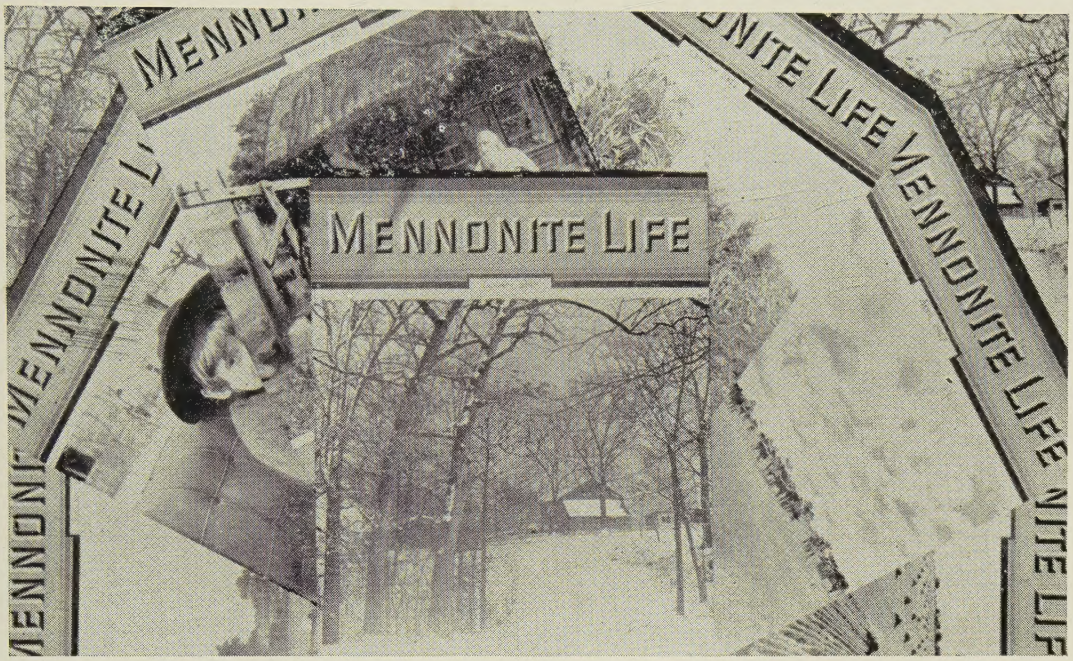

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MENNONITE LIFE

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Mennonite Life is an illustrated quarterly magazine published in January, April, July and October by Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas. Entered as second-class matter December 20, 1946, at the post office at North Newton, Kansas, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Contributors in this Issue

(From left to right)

WALTER ADRIAN, now a Mennonite Central Committee representative in Vienna, based this story on an original diary one of his ancestors kept on the journey from Prussia to Russia (p. 23).

SIBOLD S. SMEDING, pastor of the Mennonite congregations of Nordhorn and Grijpskerk, Holland, has had a career in the Dutch merchant marine and in journalistic work (p. 16).

PIET VAN DER MEULEN, a Dutch Mennonite minister, has just written his doctor's thesis on the subject of the birth of the Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit (p. 20).

N. E. BYERS, former president of Goshen College and dean of Bluffton College, had an active part in the formation and activities of the All-Mennonite Convention (p. 7).

H. GOERZ, formerly of Russia is now a teacher in a Hutterian Bruderhof at Arden, Manitoba, Canada. He has recently published a collection of German poems (p.40).

J. WINFIELD FRETZ, teaches social sciences at Bethel College. He has had a leading part in the founding and the programs of the Conferences on Mennonite Cultural Problems (p. 9).

WALTER QUIRING is a Mennonite scholar from Russia now in Germany. He is the author of numerous books and articles, particularly on the Mennonites in Paraguay (p. 30).

D. D. REMPEL, a teacher in Russia, came to Canada with one of the first immigrant groups in 1923. Here he is a farmer and active in Mennonite school and community affairs (p. 42).

CORNELIUS KRAHN, Editor of *Mennonite Life*, studied the European Mennonites extensively and attended two of the conferences described in the article, "Mennonite World Conferences" (pp. 3, 45).

WALTER KUHN has written his doctor's thesis on the German element in Galicia, has taught at the University of Breslau and is now teaching at the University of Hamburg (p. 35).

ARNOLD DYCK is a writer, publisher, and artist of North Kildonan, Manitoba. His article is a chapter from the fifth volume (unpublished) of *Verloren in der Steppe* (p. 29).

PIET DOVES and HENK ENS (not shown) are active in the Dutch Mennonite youth movement (pp. 11,15).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Swiss Information Bureau, photography, left bottom, p. 3. Pictures pp. 11-15 from *Doopsgezinde Jongeren Bond* Archives. Menno Simons pictures pp. 16-19 from Amsterdam Mennonite Church Archives; Photographic department of Amsterdam University; The *Rijks Prenten Kabinet;* Mennonite Church of Utrecht; and Arend Hendriks, Wassenaar, Holland. Pictures pp. 20, 22, from Amsterdam Mennonite Church Archives. Pictures pp. 30-33, 38, submitted by Cornelius J. Claassen. Pictures pp. 35-37, bottom p. 40, submitted by J. H. Janzen. Pictures bottom pp. 41, 43, 44, submitted by Agnes Epp. Picture p. 44 submitted by Walter Quiring. Photography p. 25 by Reuben Fanders. Magdalen Friesen, translation, Johann Cornies. John F. Schmidt, translation, *The Cultural Achievements of the Chortiza Mennonites* and *From Russia to Canada.*

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Mennonite World Conferences

BY CORNELIUS KRAHN

BASICALLY, Mennonites have practiced an individualistic type of piety with emphasis on the independence and autonomy of the local congregation. This is not conducive to the growth of a centrally administered organization on a national or an international scale. Ever since the beginning of the Mennonite brotherhood in the sixteenth century, co-operation of congregations in one country or across national boundaries grew spontaneously in response to a common concern or some urgent need. Co-operation and unity were not so much attained by subscribing to a common creed or by adopting an organizational system, as by responding to an emergency which brought Mennonites together for a common task. This was the case during the sixteenth century in times of persecution and martyrdom and this is still the avenue which brings us together today.

There have been Mennonite conferences beyond national boundaries in centuries past. We are, however, not dealing with them at this time. Our discussion will be restricted to the world conferences which have been held since 1925. The first one was held in Switzerland, the second in Danzig, the third in The Netherlands, and the fourth is to convene in America.

The Anniversary Conference at Basel and Zurich, 1925

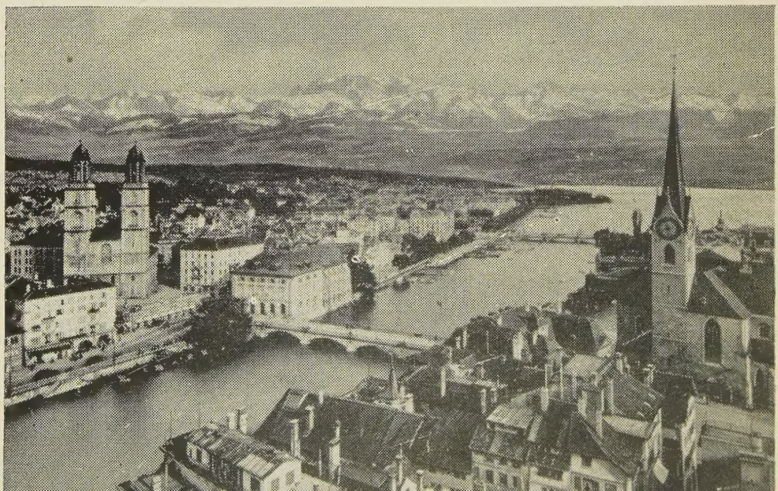
Early in 1924, Christian Neff, chairman of the Conference of South German Mennonites, suggested, at the meeting of the Conference, that steps should be taken to commemorate the founding of the Mennonite church which had taken place in the beginning of the year, 1525. The conference decided to commemorate the four hundredth aniversary of the founding of the Mennonite church in all congregations on January 25, 1925; to call a World Conference of Mennonites to take place in Switzerland, and to publish a memorial in book form. At another conference at the Weierhof, Germany, on March 7, a tentative program was adopted and invitations to attend the conference were issued to Mennonites in all countries. The Swiss Mennonites, especially, helped in preparing the conference.

Thus the first Mennonite World Conference took place June 13-16, 1925, in Basel and Zurich, Switzerland. Some of the principal speakers were: Jakob Kroeker, Wernigerode; W. Koehler, Zurich; and Christian Neff, Weierhof. The topics, interspersed by greetings from representatives of various countries, centered around subjects pertaining to the founding of the Mennonite church four hundred years ago. Epochmaking experiences were the occasions when in Basel, as well as in Zurich, representatives of the Reformed church and of the civil authorities presented greetings and apologized for the harsh treatment which their predecessers in office had accorded the forefathers of the Mennonites by exiling, imprisoning, and putting to death the founders of the Mennonite church. As evidence of the sincerity of these apologies the University of Zurich conferred upon Christian Neff, the chairman of the conference, the honorary degree of doctor of theology.

The Mennonites of Germany had sent the largest representation, and a number of Dutch Mennonites had accepted the invitation. America was represented only by H. J. Krehbiel, of Reedley, California, chairman of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America. The delegate from Russia, Jakob Rempel, had received permission to leave Russia but was stopped at the border and was not permitted to enter Switzerland. The Mennonites of Russia had experienced a breathing spell and had just held a well-attended general Mennonite conference in Moscow. Ambitiously they proposed the organization of an All-Mennonite Union to include Mennonites the world over with the purpose of giving mutual help in supporting schools, strengthening small groups, establishing missions, and aiding needy brethren and

. Neff, J. Kroeker, E. Haendiges, Chr. Hege, W. Koehler, W. uehler, H. J. Krehbiel, and C. Nijdam were among delegates.

Grossmuenster, Zurich, Switzerland, cradle of Mennonite church. Scene of first Mennonite World Conference, 1925.



Second Mennonite World Conference, Danzig, 1930, devoted to problem of aiding refugees from Russia.

immigrants. This program was to be carried out without affecting the complete freedom and independence of each group and conference. The proposal was discussd in detail and resulted in the request that Christian Neff should call another meeting of the Mennonite World Conference in two or three years. The matter of the *Mennonitische Lexikon* in publication was also presented at this occasion.

Mennonite World Aid Conference, Danzig, 1930

According to authorization, Christian Neff took the initiative in arranging for the meeting of the second Mennonite World Conference. He invited Dutch and Swiss representatives to meet with the Executive Committee of the *Vereinigung der Mennoniten im Deutschen Reich,* April 28, 1930, at Elbing.

The choice of place and the arrangement of the program clearly indicate that this was an emergency conference. Mennonitism in Russia was being attacked at the core of its being. Thousands were being sent into exile and other thousands attempted to escape destruction by crossing the border. Some three thousand had just reached Germany. These had to be aided in establishing new homes, and—what could be done for those who had not yet succeeded in crossing the border? Plans had to be made. Thus it was agreed that a Mennonite World Aid Conference was to be held at Danzig from August 31 to September 3, 1930, for the purpose of (1) receiving authorized reports from the various Mennonite congregations and organizations about the relief work which had been done in the past; (2) receiving dependable and complete reports on the conditions among the suffering Mennonites of Russia; and (3) co-ordinating all direct and indirect relief activities.

Erich Goettner, Danzig; Christian Neff, Weierhof; and Johann Penner, Prussia; in co-operation with B. H. Unruh, worked out the program for the conference which was presented for approval to the Mennonites of Holland, France, and Switzerland. By June a tentative program had been prepared and invitations were issued to Mennonites from all countries to attend the conference.

The opening sermon of the conference was preached by the pastor of the Danzig Mennonite Church, E. Goettner, on Psalm 50:15. The chairmanship of the conference alternated between Christian Neff, Germany, P. B. Westerdijk, Holland, and David Toews, Canada. In addition to the many greetings that were brought, the discussions and lectures given centered around the subject: "The Emergency and How to Relieve It." This subject was subdivided into three headings around which all lectures and deliberations of the representatives of the various countries centered. Numerous lectures were given on "Brotherly Aid in the Past," "Brotherly Aid at Present," and "Brotherly Aid in the Future." The awareness of having several thousand homeless refugees right in the neighborhood, some of whom attended the conference, impressed each conference guest with the urgency and significance of this very definite task. Many of the visitors attended the refugee camps previous to or following the conference and thus received firsthand information.

Jakob Kroeker, Wernigerode, Germany, preached the farewell sermon, after which a general resolution concerning the relief activities was adopted. After the conference was officially closed, some thirty guests made a trip by bus to acquaint themselves with some of the Prussian Mennonite homes, farms, churches, etc.

The second Mennonite World Conference was better organized and better attended than the first one. America and Holland were well represented. The Swiss Mennonites had preferred not to attend the conference and the Russian Mennonites had been unable to send an official representative.

Menno Simons World Conference, Holland, 1936

At the Danzig World Conference, Christian Neff had been asked to take the initiative in calling the next con-

ference. This he did in addressing the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit,* of Holland on June 3, 1934, suggesting that the third conference should be held in Holland in commemoration of the four hundredth anniversary of the conversion of Menno Simons in 1536. The Dutch Mennonites appointed a committee to prepare the conference program, to which Christian Neff added representatives from other countries. The first session of this committee took place in Amsterdam on May 8, 1935. The date for the conference was set and the program gradually prepared.

Invitations to the conference found a wide response. From Germany some 145 visitors arrived by bus or train. Ten came from the United States and Canada. Even South America and the Far East were represented. Again the Mennonites from Russia were unable to send a delegate. The total number of registered visitors was 343. The conference took place from June 29 to July 3, 1936.

The first part of the conference took place in the venerable old *Singel Kerk* of Amsterdam. The opening sermon was delivered by A. K. Kuiper, retired pastor of that congregation, on the motto of Menno Simons as found in I Corinthians 3:11. In commemoration of the conversion of Menno Simons, N. van der Zijpp spoke on the significance of Menno Simons' work for our brotherhood. Then followed a survey of Mennonites the world over under the general theme, "Mennonites in Past and Present." Representatives of the various countries summarized briefly their past experiences and present situation. Holland, Germany, Switzerland, United States, Canada, Russia, and South America were represented.

The conference guests had the opportunity of seeing the beautiful city of Amsterdam by taking a sightseeing tour by boat through the canals of the city. After this the entire group went by boat across the Zuider Zee to Harderwijk and from there to the camping grounds of the *Gemeentedagbeweging,* at Elspeet. Here the second part of the conference was held, centering around lectures and discussions pertaining to youth work and activities, relief and migration, mission, and the attitude of Mennonites toward culture. The conference guests had the opportunity of acquainting themselves not only with the beautiful camping grounds of the *Gemeentedagbeweging,* but also with its spirit and activities.

From Elspeet the group moved to Witmarsum, in Friesland, the village in which Menno Simons was born, where he served as a priest in the Catholic Church, and had his spiritual struggle, until he found the true way of salvation and the courage to give up the church with its security. It was here, also, where in 1536 he joined a small band of persecuted Christians which were later named after him. Here in the open field, around the Menno Simons monuments, gathered some fifteen hundred Mennonites from the various provinces of Holland and the various countries throughout the world to listen to the addresses given at this occasion. The final service took place in the Reformed Church at Witmarsum in which four centuries previous Menno Simons very likely served as a priest of the Catholic church. A. H. van Drooge, chairman of the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit,* delivered the sermon which was broadcast over the national network of Holland. Thus the third Mennonite World Conference came to a close.

This conference, like the others, was not an official body passing resolutions and executing them, nor were the deliberations and suggestions which were carried home in any way binding upon the local groups. And yet impressions were received and taken home where they continued to bear influence. Some resolutions were adopted. One expressed regret for the absence of the Mennonites of Russia to whose need the preceeding conference had been devoted. Another one dealt with the debt incurred through the migration of Mennonites from Russia to Canada. The relief committees of the various countries decided to make the hitherto unofficial headquarters for relief work of B. H. Unruh, Karlsruhe, Germany, the official Central Bureau for Mennonite Relief. At a special meeting a peace manifesto was endorsed and steps were taken to organize an International Mennonite Peace Committee.

It can be said that the third Mennonite World Con-

Third World Conference, Holland, 1936, held partly in Commemoration of Menno Simons' conversion in 1536.

ference was the most successful in terms of attendance, preparation, and program, insight gained about actual problems and about conditions prevailing among Mennonites in various countries. It did help pave the way for closer co-operation in the pursuit of common objectives. The reception committee headed by Fritz Kuiper, chairman of the *Gemeentedagbeweging*, demonstrated organizational talent and Dutch hospitality to the utmost. All lectures were summarized in German and in Dutch and distributed to the guests. Even a special songbook was prepared for this occasion with Dutch and German songs. All guests wore the conference badge with their names.

American Mennonite World Conference, 1948

Unfortunately, World War II prevented the holding of another World Conference in America after an interval of about five years, and also disrupted nearly all contacts of Mennonites from the various countries. However, American Mennonite relief activities were carried on in whatever country this was possible during the war. Thus contacts between the Mennonites of various countries were established on a more intimate basis and for longer duration than heretofor. Small-scale conferences represented by Mennonites from various countries were held in Elspeet, Basel, and other places.

Among the leading men of the previous Mennonite World Conferences that have since passed on is also Christian Neff, the initiator and moderator of past conferences. Nevertheless, responsibility for the promotion of future World Conferences was accepted by others.

The ministers of the Western District of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America at a meeting of their regular fall session in November, 1946, urged the General Conference officers to take the initiative in starting proceedings to bring the next Mennonite World Conference to North America. These Western District ministers invited this World Conference to convene in North Newton, Kansas.

The Executive Secretary of the General Conference established some initial contacts with other Mennonite conferences in America and in Europe. At the meeting of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America at Berne, Indiana, 1947, it was agreed to ask the Mennonite Central Committee to sponsor the next World Conference. The Mennonite Central Committee responded favorably and appointed committees to prepare all phases of the conference by contacting the various Mennonite conferences in this and other countries, by arranging for the coming of some fifty representatives from Europe and South America, preparing the program, etc. The Mennonite Central Committee decided to have the foreign guests first meet at Akron, Pennsylvania, then proceed to Goshen, Indiana, where the first part of the conference will be held August 3-5, while the second part will convene at North Newton, Kansas, August 7-10.

The general planning of the conference and the working out of the program is in the hands of the chairman and vice-chairman of the Mennonite Central Committee, P. C. Hiebert and H. A. Fast, respectively. The program includes topics such as faith and life, missions, education, institutions, relief, resettlement, nonresistance, youth activities, nonconformity, etc., treated from various angles by speakers from the different countries. The range is wider than that of any previous World Conference. No doubt, the conference will also be attended by a greater number of guests than any other. It offers ample opportunity for the guests to acquaint themselves with the various beliefs, practices, and activities of the many groups of Mennonites of Europe and America. This first-hand information will, indeed, offer a unique opportunity. There will also be occasion to confront in a more direct way the problems which the Mennonites of the different countries are facing today—problems which may be very remote from some of us. We will have opportunity to note the differences in beliefs, practices, and activities of Mennonites today, but above all, we will be able to see and experience how much we have in common—the unchangeable Christian truth and salvation in Jesus Christ and the deep concern for our fellow brethren which we all share.

As in days past the great emergency of physical and spiritual need drew the brotherhood-at-large together to spread the glad tidings of our Lord and Savior and to lend a helping hand to those in dire need of their daily bread so let us, in our day, when the need—spiritual and physical—is immeasurable, join hands in the common task.

* * * *

Haunski enn Greetki

Haunski set em Schorsteen
Fleckt sick sieni Schoh,
Kemmt doa Naobasch Greetki aun
Sach am flietig to.

„Haunski, wellst du friei,
Dann frie du doch nao mie!
Eck hab scheenit Spältig,
Daut jäw eck dann die!"

„Spältig es to weinig,
Enn Kruschki sen to väl."
„Enn Haunski, wellst du friei,
Dann frie du doch nao mie!"

Haunski enn Greetki jinge top oppim Staj
Haunski foll 'nen, enn Greetki rannt waj.
Haunski ropt: „Greetki, komm halp mie 'rut,
Saulst uck waori mieni leewsti Brut!"

From *Mennonitische Volkswarte*, 1935, page 66.

The All-Mennonite Convention

BY N. E. BYERS

IN *The Mennonite,* September 12, 1912, the following call for a general convention of all Mennonites appeared:

This invitation may be said to have originated in a discussion about two years ago, carried on by the *Gospel Herald* and *The Mennonite* on the question, "In What Fundamentals Do Mennonites Agree?" This led to an article on "Mennonite Unity," by N. E. Byers, in which he moves that a representative committee of all different bodies be selected by the editor of *The Mennonite,* I. A. Sommer, who did so about a year later. Thus a committee of eight was formed representing as many different Mennonite conferences.

The call for the convention was signed by J. E. Hartzler, chairman, and P. H. Richert, secretary.

The discussion referred to was started by an editorial written in *The Mennonite* by the editor, I. A. Sommer, May 5, 1910, on the subject, "In What Fundamentals Do Mennonites Agree?" He pointed out that too much emphasis had been put on the differences, mostly non-essential, between the branches and not enough on the fundamentals in which they agree. At the time of the Apostles, he said, there was a diversity of opinion on some vital questions, but instead of dividing into different factions they called a conference in Jerusalem, and came to an agreement. He suggested that likewise Mennonites today could meet for the purpose of friendly and brotherly deliberation. The purpose of such a gathering should not be to form a unification or federation, but in some informal way to find out in what fundamentals we agree, and, possibly a word of encouragement to all concerned in the general work of missions, education, publication, etc.

The discussion, following this article by I. A. Sommer, was carried on by John Horsch, and Daniel Kauffman, in the *Gospel Herald* and by Silas Grubb, in *The Mennonite.* The contention of the former was that while there was much agreement on fundamentals of the Mennonite faith; there was, however, disagreement on some essentials, and these latter would be lost sight of in any attempt at unity. A special point was made of the fact that the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America had affiliated with the Federal Council of Churches, and this would tend to lead this group farther away from the Mennonite faith. Silas Grubb defended this affiliation at some length.

It was following this discussion that the article entitled, "Mennonite Unity," mentioned above, appeared in *The Mennonite,* August 18, 1910. The author, N. E. Byers, then President of Goshen College, said in part:

I am quite sure that if we could get into personal contact with each other and know each other better, we would find that we have much more in common than we now are aware of. As long as we stand apart and view each other critically, with the prejudices we have inherited from our fathers, we will have no real desire to unite. But, if we get acquainted, I believe that there will be enough love for each other and our great common cause to exercise such charity and self-sacrifice as will be necessary to get together on a working basis.

The following plan for an All-Mennonite Convention was submitted:

The editor of *The Mennonite* shall ask representatives of at least five of the larger branches of the denomination to act as a committee to select the more distinctively Mennonite beliefs and invite speakers from all the different branches to be present at a time and place, to be chosen by the committee, to thoroughly discuss these subjects before a general meeting to which all Mennonites of America shall be invited. The editor of the *Gospel Herald* gives a good preliminary list of topics from which they might select some of the subjects.

I. A. Sommer appointed a committee of eight and they met and arranged a program and sent out a call for invitations from churches that wished to entertain the convention. Three churches responded: the Berne, Indiana, and Beatrice, Nebraska, General Conference churches and the Mennonite Brethren in Christ Church in Nappanee, Indiana. The invitation from Berne, Indiana, was accepted, and the convention called for August 19-20, 1913.

The meeting was opened by P. H. Richert, secretary of the program committee, and the convention sermon was preached by Christian Neff, of Weierhof, Germany. The officers elected for the convention were J. S. Hartzler, Goshen, Indiana, moderator; P. H. Richert, Goessel, Kansas, assistant moderator; H. P. Krehbiel, Newton, Kansas, and A. B. Rutt, Chicago, Illinois, secretaries.

There was special interest in the paper by Daniel Kauffman on the subject: "In What Fundamentals Do Mennonites Agree?" because it continued the previous discussion in the church papers which had given rise to the calling of the convention. He had sent a questionnaire to twenty-five brethren representing nine different bodies. After reporting his findings on agreements and differences, his conclusions as summarized by the secretaries were:

Union among Mennonites on a whole gospel; . . . . No compromise of the truth; an equal loyalty to truth and to love; no entangling alliances with any forces which tend to draw us away from each other; those occupying extreme positions in either progressiveness or conservatism to lead the way by taking steps toward middle ground; confederation of forces discouraged until

there is practical oneness in faith and practice; individual effort emphasized as being the most effective means of work.

Aside from this note of caution there was quite general agreement as to the value of such meetings, and steps were taken to organize for the continuation of what was now called the All-Mennonite Convention. No constitution was adopted and no permanent organization formed, but at the close of each meeting, officers and program committee were elected to plan for and conduct the next meeting.

Meetings were held as follows: Berne, Indiana, 1913; Carlock, Illinois, 1916; Bluffton, Ohio, 1919; Goshen, Indiana, 1922; Nappanee, Indiana, 1925; Hillsboro, Kansas, 1927; Berne, Indiana, 1930; Newton, Kansas, 1933; Topeka, Indiana, 1936. The proceedings of these conventions have all been published.

At some of the meetings resolutions were passed calling for co-operative action. At Carlock, Illinois, in 1916, J. A. Huffman, Bluffton, Ohio, and Jacob Snyder, Altoona, Pennsylvania, were appointed to visit the President of the United States, and present a petition stating the position of Mennonites on participation in war and requesting that conscientious scruples of non-resistant people be respected in laws to be enacted for compulsory military training. At the next meeting in Bluffton, J. A. Huffman reported that such a petition had been presented to President Wilson.

At the Bluffton meeting a committee was appointed to devise a plan for the publication of a young people's paper to meet the needs of all Mennonite young people. Another resolution at the same meeting called for united action to endow a peace chair at one of our educational institutions. The records do not show that any action was ever taken to carry out these resolutions.

At the last meeting, at Topeka, Indiana, in 1936, officers were elected as usual to call another meeting but no action was taken by those appointed. The rather loose organization by which the convention was continued worked very well as long as the meetings were held within the limited territory of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. However, at Nappanee it was decided to meet every two years and to alternate between eastern and western locations, thus making it possible for more people to attend. The result was that the officers elected for the succeeding meeting were not always present when elected and consequently were not in touch with the spirit and plans of the convention. This lack of continuity in the organization and perhaps the thought, on the part of some, that since there was now more co-operation among Mennonites the convention had served its purpose, accounted for the fact that no further convention was called.

In this connection it will be of interest to enumerate some of the co-operative activities that have been initiated since the first meeting of the All-Mennonite Convention was held in 1913.

The organization of Bluffton College and Witmarsum Theological Seminary, in which members of five different branches participated, was completed at a meeting of the board of trustees at Berne, Indiana, at the time of the first meeting of the convention.

The largest co-operative enterprise, officially supported by all branches of the denomination, is the Mennonite Central Committee. During the quarter century of its existence large numbers of all kinds of Mennonites have co-operated as officials and as workers in relief projects, Civilian Public Service camps, and volunteer service activities. These have turned out to be great training agencies for developing leaders who have learned to know and understand all types in the denomination. The reunions now being held by these workers will keep this fellowship alive and enable them to co-operate in all kinds of church work.

Some of the ministers from the "Old" Mennonite church passed rather freely between pastorates in the Central and General Conferences and have become connecting links between the three groups. Several of the present leaders of the Central and General Conferences are of the so-called "Old" Mennonite background.

In the early part of this period the "Old" Mennonites and some Amish Mennonites were united in the Mennonite General Conference and recently the Central Conference has become a district of the General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America. It is obvious that the former tendency to divide into more branches has been reversed, and it is to be hoped that more such mergers may be formed in the future.

Another form of co-operation is represented by the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges. The presidents of these colleges have met frequently to discuss their common problems during the war period. They conduct an annual educational conference and since the war have brought a number of foreign students to America to attend these colleges.

Recently our historians have organized the Mennonite Research Fellowship to co-operate in research work for the church. They took the initiative in organizing a committee which plans to publish *The Mennonite Encyclopedia,* a comprehensive reference work on the Anabaptist-Mennonite movement.

The Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems meets annually to discuss social, educational, and religious problems to stimulate and unify the thinking of the church.

If the All-Mennonite Convention had some part in promoting these many forms of co-operation, then perhaps its purpose has been served. All of these activities bring many of us together each year. We may now know each other better as time goes on and be drawn closer together in our thinking and ways of living.

In the beginning the more conservative ones thought that the concessions would all be on their part but anyone who has watched the process going on knows that all have been influenced by the study of our historic

(Continued on page 10)

Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems, Bluffton, Ohio. Attended by leaders of many Mennonite groups.

CONFERENCES ON MENNONITE CULTURAL PROBLEMS

BY J. WINFIELD FRETZ

THE Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems has been held annually for the past six years. It had its beginning in a preliminary planning conference which, for want of a better name, was called The Conference on Mennonite Sociology. This conference was held in Chicago on December 31, 1941. It was attended by forty-two Mennonites who had common concerns with regard to Mennonite life and culture. This preliminary conference was arranged in connection with the annual meetings of the Mennonite Central Committee and the annual American Historical Association meeting, which was held in Chicago at that time and which two conferences a number of our Mennonite people attended.

For several years previous to 1941 it became increasingly clear to certain individuals who were concerned with Mennonite history and sociology, that certain problems were common to all Mennonite groups in America, and that these problems could best be dealt with if discussed and analyzed together. It was recognized, however, that there was no occasion which provided an opportunity for such common problems to be discussed. Therefore, this initiating group decided it would be valuable for Mennonite teachers, ministers, and other interested church members of all Mennonite groups who were concerned with the total religious and cultural life of the Mennonites to arrange for annual meetings.

There were certain social forces at work in the world which emphasized the urgency of action in this direction. An immediate situation was the threat of war and its impact on the Mennonite way of life. More direct, but no less significant, were the influence of increasing secularization characterized by urbanization and materialism and its threat to the traditional Christian values cherished by Mennonites. These dynamic forces threatened to change adversely such basic institutions as the Mennonite family, the Mennonite community, and the Mennonite church.

A ready and enthusiastic response of everyone who was invited to this initial meeting indicated that the time was ripe for annual conferences to discuss Mennonite cultural problems. At the conclusion of the Conference on Mennonite Sociology, it was unanimously agreed by those present to plan for the first Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems during the coming summer of 1942. A chairman was elected to proceed with plans and arrange for the first conference.

Six meetings of the Conference on Mennonite Cultural Problems have been held, not counting the preliminary planning conference held in Chicago. The first conference was held at Winona Lake, Indiana, on August 7-8, 1942. The second conference was held in Goshen, Indiana, July 22-23, 1943; the third at North Newton, Kansas, August 18-19, 1944; the fourth at Bluffton, Ohio, August 24-25,

1945; the fifth at Freeman, South Dakota, August 27-28, 1946; and the sixth at Goshen, Indiana, August 1-2, 1947. The 1948 conference is being omitted in view of the Mennonite World Conference, which is being held in the United States. The 1949 conference has been planned and is scheduled to be held at Hillsboro, Kansas. The cultural conferences have been held largely on some Mennonite college campus or in the nearby vicinity. It has been proposed that future conferences might be held in Mennonite communities that would afford special points of interest and phases of culture worthy of special study. One experiment with such a conference was that of the 1946 conference, which was held at Freeman, South Dakota. The entire conference was given to a study of the history, life, and principles of the Hutterian Brethren. A day's visit to the Hutterian colony located in the vicinity of Freeman was a high point of the conference.

During the past six years the conferences have afforded opportunity for over sixty different individuals to participate by reading papers on pertinent topics in these conferences. An average of twelve addresses were given at each conference. The average attendance has been 110, and the conference guests have come from an average of twelve states each year. The group is made up largely of Mennonite ministers, teachers from Mennonite colleges, and interested laymen from the surrounding communities in which the conferences are held. The varying location of the conferences gives many interested individuals in local communities an opportunity to attend these conferences who otherwise would not participate in them.

The cultural conference was started somewhat spontaneously by interested individuals. Its first annual meeting was held under the auspices of the then newly formed Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges. This council appoints a planning committee each year, and the committee then makes the arrangements for the ensuing conference. A portion of the conference discussions are centered around problems of specific interest to Mennonite colleges.

No topic that has affected the religious and cultural life of the Mennonites in the past or that will likely affect them in the future is out of order for discussion in cultural conferences.

Thus far, problems pertaining to economics, religion, rural life, ethics, medicine, vocational assistance to young people, sociological factors, such as the influence of environment on ideals, the peace doctrines of the Mennonites, problems of migration, aspects of community life, and educational problems have been discussed. An effort is made to balance the program between various interests. The aesthetic has not been omitted. Papers have been read on the development of music in the Mennonite church, the expression of Mennonite ideals in art, the place of Mennonites in literature, the constructive use of leisure time in Mennonite communities, and the relation of church architecture to Mennonite principles.

Concern for religious life has been central in the discussions of the conferences. This has been especially emphasized in those sections of the conference planned and directed by the Council of Mennonite and Affiliated Colleges. Such problems as the required courses in Bible offered in Mennonite schools, the development of preaching in the Mennonite church, the attitude of the church toward the state, toward organized labor, and the religious views and practices of various Mennonite groups have been discussed. A considerable amount of time has been devoted to the educational efforts of Mennonites, and especially to the methods of transmitting Christian ideals in the face of a public school system which is open to criticism for its secularizing influence.

By means of these conferences ideas are shared and, because the addresses are printed, a valuable collection of records is built for future references and use. The addresses are valuable contributions to existing knowledge in the field of Mennonite culture. Through a continuation of these conferences, social, religious, and educational problems confronting all Mennonites will be discussed.

Thus far the conferences have served as an inspiration not only to those who have participated but to many young people who are searching for understanding of their own and related Mennonite groups. The conferences have demonstrated intellectual vigor seasoned by a deep concern for the life and principles that lie within the Mennonite heritage.

* * * *

ALL MENNONITE CONVENTIONS

(Continued from page 8)

principles and have thus been more thoroughly grounded in the essentials of our faith. The General Conference of the Mennonite Church of North America withdrew from the Federal Council of Churches and has since placed more emphasis on our Mennonite heritage. On the other hand, mere tradition has been subjected to critical study in the light of modern conditions and needs, and some forms and practices that formerly divided us may have been modified or accepted with understanding and tolerance.

While these unifying tendencies have been going on, unfortunately, other divisive forces have been at work. Some of the smaller branches and minority groups in some of the larger, have been influenced more by other "isms" and schools than by this strong unified Mennonitism and our denominational institutions. If all of our leaders and workers could be trained in Mennonite colleges and seminaries, then, I am sure, we could look to the future with confidence that the great co-operative enterprises that have been so well started could, under God's guidance, become an ever-increasing force in the work of His Kingdom.

Executive Committee of *Doopsgezinde Jongeren Bond*, Dutch Mennonite youth organization. Prior to World War II.

Dutch Mennonite Youth

BY PIET DOVES

IN 1928 a group of Dutch Mennonites met to discuss the possibilities of organizing the Mennonite youth in Holland. A few local youth organizations were already in existence, and the experience of these facilitated the forming of a national organization. After many discussions, a constitution was presented and adopted, bringing into existence the *Doopsgezinde Jongeren Bond*.

Holland was divided into eleven districts, each having its own board, consisting of a representative of each of the local units. One of the district board members is also a member of the national committee, thus serving as liaison between the general committee and the district. Each district consists of local groups *(Kringen)* which have their own organizations.

The local groups are composed of the young people of the various congregations. These groups have as their chief objective the development of a warm Christian fellowship. To achieve this end they have meetings every two weeks for worship and discussion, recreational activities, and service activities.The meetings are opened with a service of worship after which one of the group presents a talk on such topics as non-resistance, our help to war-sufferers, Mennonite history, music, etc. The recreational and service activities vary with each local group. Some go on hikes while others go on sailing trips. Service projects, such as visiting the sick and the poor, are carried on by many groups. Often local groups have joint meetings, thus becoming better acquainted with the young people from other villages. In Holland, fortunately, distances are not too great for such activities.

Once or twice a year a week-end district meeting is held to discuss common problems. These meetings begin with a lecture on Saturday evening. On Sunday morning all attend the worship service and in the evening close their week-end with a social gathering. Since guests at these meetings are provided for in the homes of church members, these week-end meetings are highly appreciated as they bring young people into intimate contact with their fellow-Christians.

During the German occupation, it was difficult to have these fellowship meetings. However, secret meetings were held which gave us renewed courage and brought us nearer to the basic values of life.

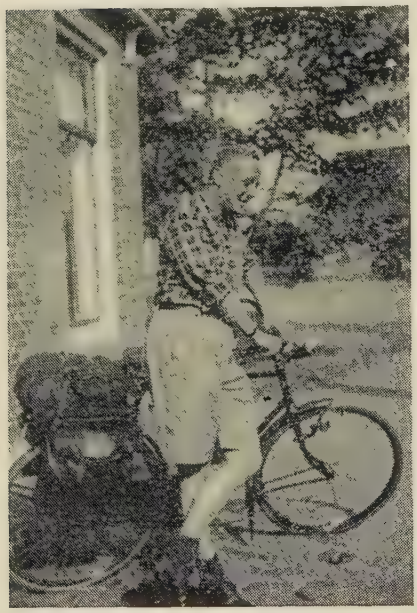
The *Jongeren Bond* tries to foster activities that will

(Continued on page 14)

At Wor

Dutch youth enjoying camp at Elspeet, 1942.

Group preparing to leave on a bicycle tour.



A stop on the road. A flat?

Founders of the *Doopsgezinde Jongeren Bond*, Elspeet, 1928

Assisting a neighbor in repairing a flat tire.

A hiking group resting near a canal.

d Play

Camp group returns from church by boat.

Going to church by boat at Giethorn.

Portrayal of prodigal son welcomed home by his father.

Hiking in the sand dunes.

Sailing on the lake near Giethorn.

Samen-een, popular camping-house on lake.

Trips were made abroad in order to fellowship with South German, Prussian, and English youth.

World youth in the Amsterdam Stadium.

Wor

DUTCH MENNONITE YOUTH

(Continued from page 11)

bring our young people closer to God and to Jesus Christ. The general committee provides the local groups with a means of contact through the publication of a monthly paper, *De Hoeksteen*. It consists of articles on faith and nature as well as poetry and official business of the organization. *De Hoeksteen* has come to be the voice of the Mennonite youth in Holland.

Since we also like to cultivate a more personal contact, we have two or three general meetings every year on our main camping ground near the little village of Elspeet. There we have a *Broederschapshuis (Brotherhood house)* at our disposal—four cottages that provide sleeping quarters for about two hundred people, a dining hall, and an assembly hall. This camp ground is beautifully situated amidst the heather, woods, and sand dunes in the center of The Netherlands. The buildings have suffered much during the war, and upon liberation we found: one cottage destroyed by fire, the others badly damaged; no beds, no windows, the interior of the church ruined as it was used as a garage and later as a motion picture theatre. Fortunately, it has been rebuilt. In 1946 we had our first post-war meeting.

The subjects we discuss illustrate the difficulties with which we struggle: "Life As a Gift," "Mennonites in the Past and Present," "Nonresistance and Our Attitude toward Society," etc.

In 1946, the discussion centered around our attitude toward those Dutchmen who had collaborated with the National Socialist oppressors in resisting the war efforts of the Allies and who were now in prison on charges of high treason.

Camping offers other opportunities for fellowship, so we have organized several youth camps in the most beautiful parts of our low countries. Here a group of young people may live together, close to nature, and enjoy life for a week at a time in a religious camp. Shortage in material prevents us from establishing enough youth camps to accommodate all that would like to attend.

Enjoying fellowship at a picnic in England.

A visit to a historic Quaker meeting-house.

Dutch Youth celebrates liberation, 1945.

ontacts

Dutch Mennonite youth study at American Mennonite colleges, establishing world contacts.

DURING THE WAR AND AFTER

By Henk Ens

DURING the war we have been confronted with the most important problems in life. Every one of our convictions and principles was tested under the most severe circumstances. Only a strong faith could stand such an ordeal. Immature ideals were shattered, vague convictions collapsed.

We were faced with the harsh reality where only the telling of a lie could save a loved one from the concentration camp or even death; where the word, "Love thine enemy," became a task so high and difficult that we often failed to practice it.

Out of the war emerged a youth with stronger and more realistic convictions and with a deeper faith—a youth which had lost much of its idealism and had become sceptical, sometimes even cynical, but which had become far more mature.

During the war years many people turned toward religion and found that faith is the basis of all life. One by one everything was taken out of our life: power, freedom, wealth, security, pleasure—faith alone remained. We saw that we could endure nearly all hardships as long as faith was unshaken. Never were churches better attended than in the winter of 1944-45 when our people were on the verge of starvation. Terror and plunder had reached their crest.

When the war was over and life was easier again, however, church attendance dropped again, youth organizations reported declines in membership, and interest in religious affairs diminished. Reconstruction started, theaters opened up again, life started again and pleasures returned. The church was forgotten once more.

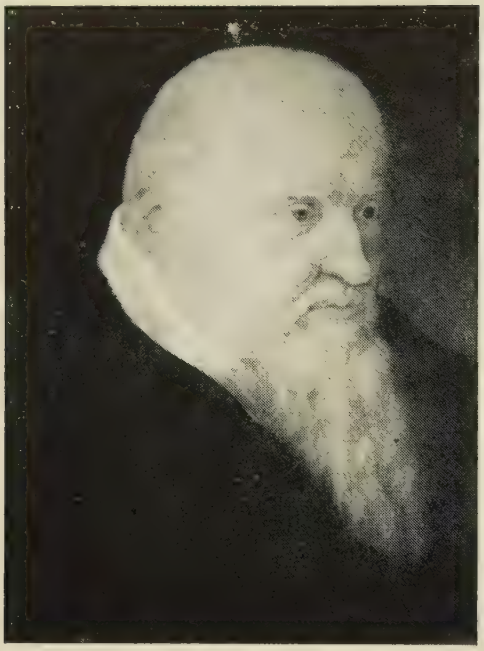
This attitude affected the Mennonite youth, too—although not to the extent that it affected the rest of the population—and at this moment we are in a severe crisis. There have been many quarrels about unimportant matters; it is hard to find people who are willing and qualified to take responsibility; attendance upon and frequency of meetings is less than a year-and-a-half ago, but there are signs of improvement. We hope to weather the storm. We want to help build a strong and faithful church.

Ready to retire at an English youth hostel. ☛

Guests of English youth at Stratford-on-Avon.

THE PORTRAIT

BY S



This painting was long considered a picture of Menno Simons, but this has been disproved.

Engraving by Abraham de Cooge (1620-1632?), one of oldest portraits (see No. 2 in article). Note crutch.

IS there a genuine portrait of Menno Simons in existence? For some time it was believed we possessed a contemporary painting by a Dutch artist of some repute, drawn from life. This painting has an interesting story. It is a fine, old Dutch oil-painting, hanging in the vestry of the Mennonite Church of Utrecht. It was formerly thought that the artist was Antonie Mor, but it is now considered to be a product of one of those anonymous masters of the sixteenth century whose names are to be found only in old townbills and guildbooks, but not on their paintings.

About 1915 a book on Martin Luther was published which contained a portrait, said to be of the Swiss reformer Zwingli, but it was soon discovered that this was the same portrait as the Utrecht painting regarded as that of our Frisian-Dutch reformer, Menno Simons! This raised the question as to the identity of this man. The outcome of a scholarly controversy between historians and art critics was: the man on these two portraits is the same person, but it is certainly not Zwingli, and as certainly not Menno Simons; but in all probability it represents Viglius van Aytta (1507-1577), a Dutch nobleman and member of the Secret Council of Charles V and of Phillip II.

This was disappointing, indeed, for the Mennonites of Utrecht; but not for them only, as reproductions of this portrait were to be found in almost all our churchrooms.

This seems to answer the question as to whether there is a genuine painting of Menno Simons, as the Utrecht painting was the only one still in existence done in the lifetime of Menno Simons. The oldest engravings we possess were made nearly a century later. And yet, I do not consider all the existing later portraits as the products of the fertile imagination of their makers. I base this belief on a passage in the *Martyr's Mirror* (Elkhart, 1886, p. 438). In the entry under *Tjaert Reynerts, A. D. 1539,* we find the following:

> At this time the tyranny and persecution against the godfearing Christians was very dreadful, so that the envious papists, who hated the truth, caused likenesses of many of the principle teachers and overseers of the church of Jesus Christ to be made, and posted up on doors, gates, and other public places, promising a large sum of money to such as should deliver them into the hands of the officers and excutioners. And since the godfearing Menno Simon, who was zealous for God, was one of the principal teachers and elders in this bloody and perilous time . . . . .

This, it seems to me, proves rather conclusively that there were portraits—presumably woodcuts—made of Menno Simons during his lifetime. Further, these portraits must have borne some resemblance to the real man,

MENNO SIMONS

IEDING

otherwise they would have been useless for the purpose. I consider it highly probable that a seventeenth century artist, commissioned to make an engraving of our "heretic," would have the use of such an older woodcut or copper-engraving, to serve him as a model, supported by descriptions from oral or written tradition.

In the Doopsgezinde Bijdragen (1916, pp. 3-106) G. J. Boekenoogen writes on "De portretten van Menno Simons," in which he gives a complete description of all known portraits of Menno Simons, already numbering more than sixty. However, we shall only consider a few of these here. G. J. Boekenoogen declares that there are only three different engravings that are important in this consideration since only these are original; all the other portraits are variations or deductions from these three. Later portraits may be most interesting from an artistic standpoint; they are of less value for historical research. These three oldest portraits are:

1.) The engraving by Christoffel van Sichem (1605-1608?)

2.) An engraving by Abraham de Cooge (1620-1632?)

3.) Another engraved portrait, by Jan van de Velde (1625-1630?)

Van Sichem's copper-plate engraving (No. 1), presumably the oldest existing, is certainly the most interesting of the three. It is skillfully executed, with a good sense for composition, and, what is most important of all, it seems that the face is true to the nature of Menno Simons. On the book in Menno's right hand are the words: "For other foundation can no man lay that that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 3:11). We think of this as the motto of Mennonitism. S. H. N. Gorter wrote about this portrait:

> It is the most speaking likeness of Menno we possess . . . . the face is determined, sharply cut, and intelligent; it looks us squarely in the eye, but, nevertheless, the whole is reposeful . . . . an honest and simple devotee. It is as if the sun shines on this man, his very features reflecting his strong and honest response to God's call.

The de Cooge portrait (No. 2) is clumsily done. It is suggested, on historical grounds, that the man who engraved it was as yet inexperienced. Nevertheless, it may represent something of the real Menno Simons.

It will be noted that the van Sichem and the de Cooge portraits both show Menno Simons with a crutch, indicating that he was a cripple. Further evidence of this is gathered from his signatures to letters as, for example, in November 30, 1555, he closes with "Signed by me, the cripple, your Brother and Servant," and another letter closes with "The Cripple, your Brother, the 12th of November, 1556."

The portrait by Jan van de Velde (No. 3) seems to

Portrait by Jan van de Velde (1625-1630?). For description of picture see page 18, under No. 3.

Engraving by Christopher van Sichem (1605-1608?), one of oldest pictures of Menno Simons (No. 1 in article).

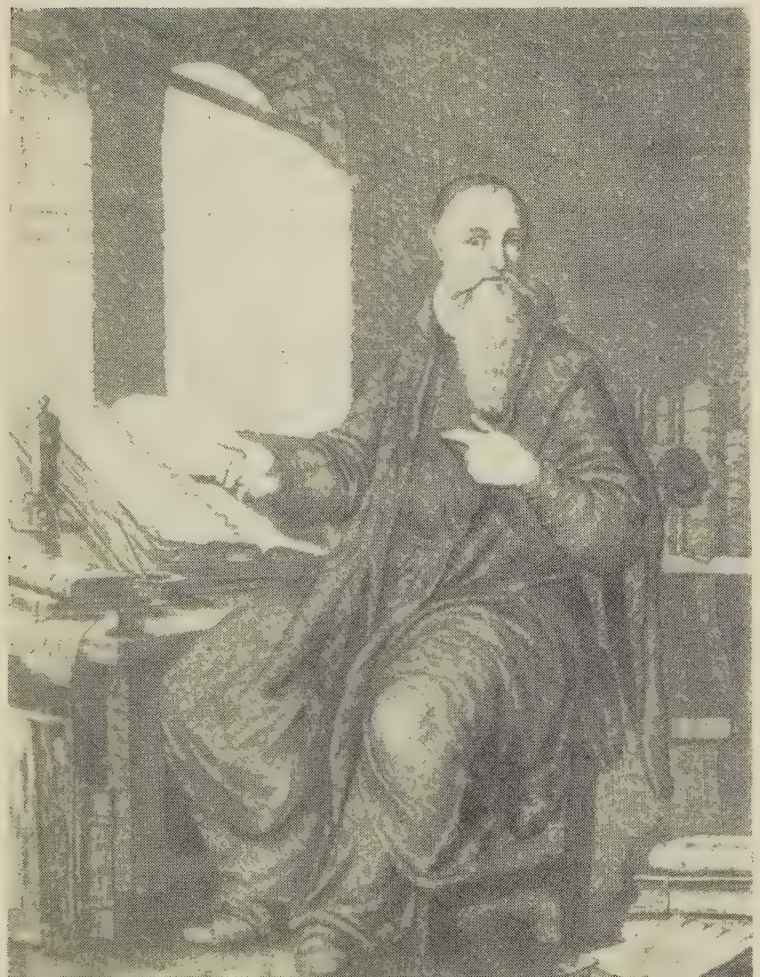
be more of an elderly, kind university professor of the nineteenth century than a man hounded by the bailiff's posse. But aside from this, there is more character in the face than the de Cooge portrait shows. and the whole conception and execution are much better.

The engraving of Menno in a long black robe (No. 4) standing behind a table with the right hand extended, was perhaps made by Pieter Holsteyn and printed by Clemendt de Ionghe, at Amsterdam. It is dated in the later part of the sixteenth century, but a comparison will easily show that it is nothing more than an enlargement of the portrait by Jan van de Velde.

One of the most interesting portraits (No. 5) with noble qualities, is doubtless the etching by the famous Dutch portraitist and illustrator, Jan Luyken, who, in his younger years, was a Mennonite himself. This portrait prefaces the folio edition of Menno's Works. It is a fine piece of workmanship, evenly balanced in its composition, and pleasing to the eye. But does it present an acceptable idea of Menno, the man? I fear not. We look upon a romantically designed portrait, of a medieval mystical scholar; it fails to present a simple, fatherly leader of the young Mennonite brotherhood.

We now come to the most widely known portrait of our Menno: that by Jacobus Burghardt of Hamburg-Altona (No. 6), made in 1683, thus more than a century after Menno's death. It measures about 17½ inches by 11 inches, and, in its octagonal cadre, enriched by all

Etching by the Mennonite artist, Jan Luyken (1649-1712). For description see No. 5, in text above.

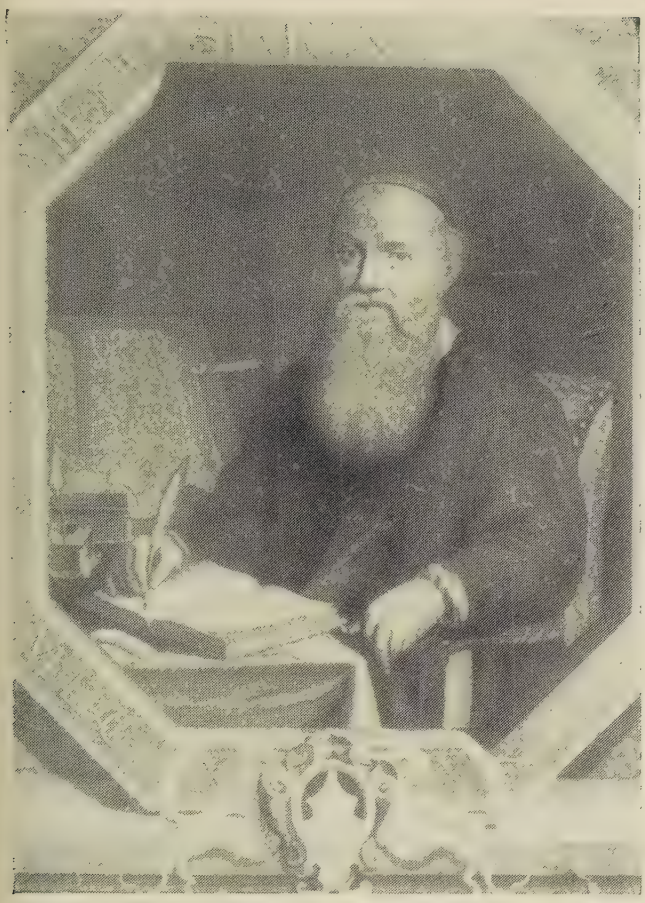


This engraving is credited to Pieter Holsteyn (see No. 4 in text). Note resemblance to portrait No. 3.

kind of ornaments and embellishments, makes a good first impression. It is to be found in many of our vestries, churchrooms, classrooms, parish houses, etc. Which, however, is more important: the "baroque" general conception and the embellishments, or the picture of the man himself? The latter, of course; and it must be said that this does not impress one very favorably. It is evidently an imitation of the Jan Luyken etching with facial features from van de Velde, but it lacks Luykens' masterly composition and execution. This is not a picture of a leader nor of a religious reformer, but of a plain middle-class man, perhaps of a seventeenth century pastor, but not of a sixteenth century religious leader and persecuted man. As for Menno's more peaceful latter years at Oldesloe, I think he was at that time "a much wiser and much sadder man" than here depicted.

Of the modern paintings worthy of mention, is the portrait by the Frisian painter Ids Wiersma executed on commission of the council of the Groninger Mennonite Church, between World Wars I and II, and based principally, I believe, on Jan Luyken and Burghardt.

Another recent portrait is the colored painting of Menno Simons produced in 1936 by Alexander Harder on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of Menno's conversion. Harder, a native of Russia, studied art in Berlin and spent several years in America. This picture is



The widely-known portrait made in 1683 by Jacobus Burkhardt. See No. 6 in article.

scarcely known in Holland. Art critics have pointed out weaknesses in its style and composition. It is to be regretted that it is based on Burghardt and not on older and historically better material. However, I am told this portrait has had a good reception generally in America, so it must have its good qualities. (The cover picture of this issue is a reproduction of this painting. *The Editors)*

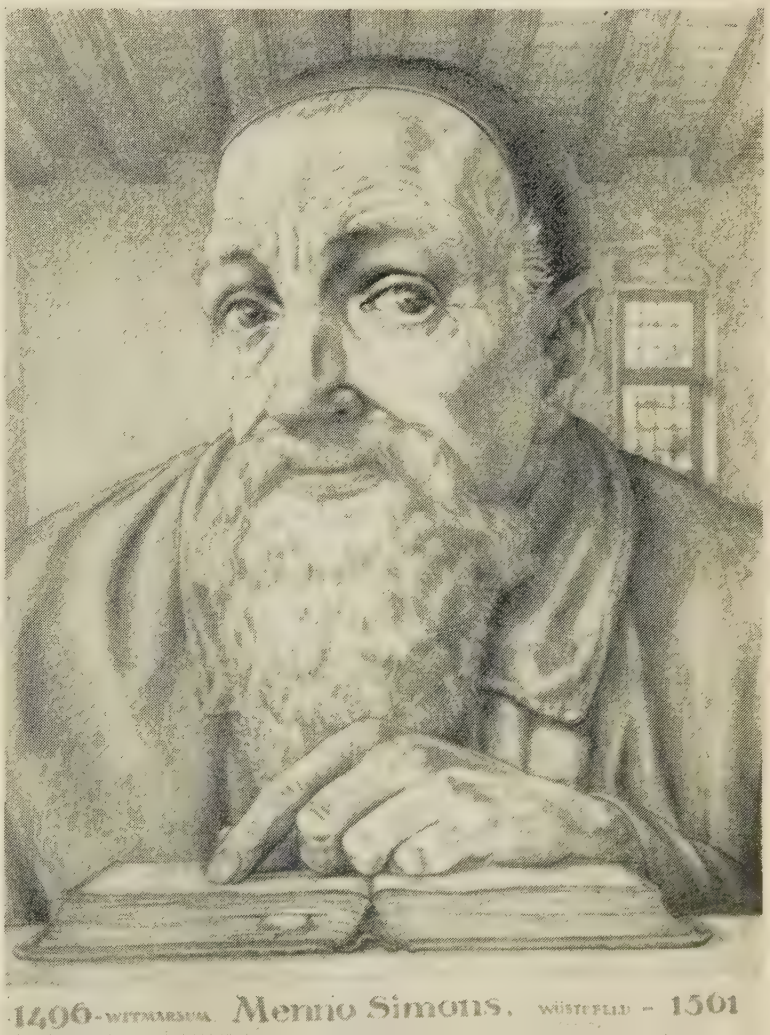
If we of the twentieth century want to have a good portrait of Menno Simons, we should fulfill, it seems to me, the following two conditions: 1.) We should make a careful study of the oldest available material; and 2.) The portrait should not disagree with the known psychology of the person in question. In an inquiry for a good portrait of Menno Simons for my study, I was told that none were available except in the form of very small and poorly printed reproductions of seventeenth century engravings. But I still wanted my portrait!

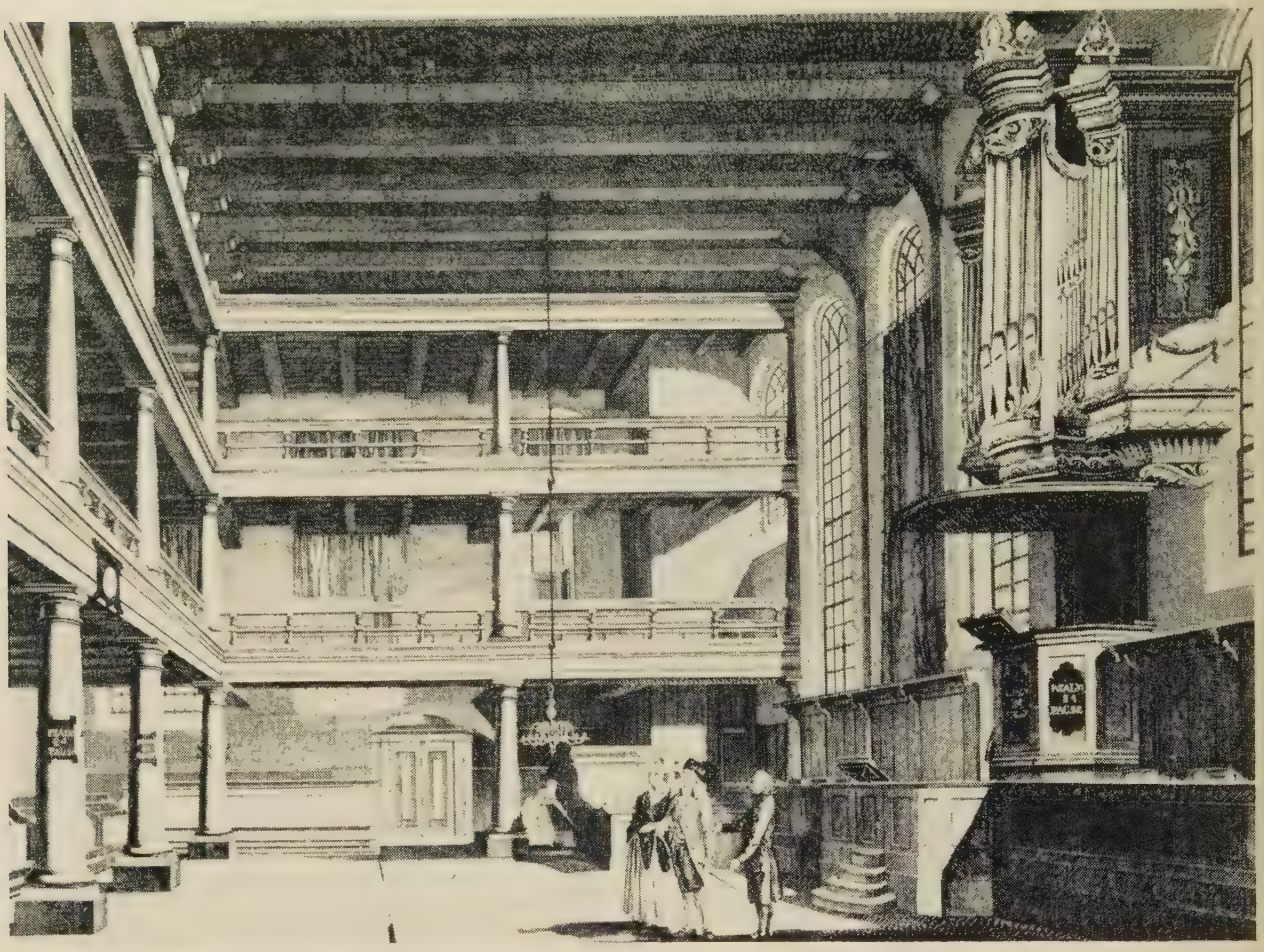
Two possibilities presented themselves: To look for a first class firm of printers and ask them to make a really fine reproduction in old style of one of the oldest prints existing, or to look for an artist of repute and suggest to him the making of a new drawing, engraving or etching, after a thorough study of the existing material. After considering both possibilities I chose the latter. *The Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit* ("General Conference of Mennonites of the Netherlands") approved of my plans and gave the commission for this work to Arend Hendriks of the Hague Academy of Arts (a renowned artist described him to me as "the foremost living Dutch etcher").

He proceeded along the lines of the conditions previously stated. That is, he made a thorough study of all the available graphic material as well as the psychological side of Menno's personality, drawn from his writings and his biographies. This accomplished, he began drawing studies in charcoal and in crayon, and when he had thus given form to the ideas that occupied his mind, he made a full-size working drawing in pencil (No. 7), which was submitted to the Publications Committee of *The Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit.* The committee members warmly applauded it.

I believe this portrait will be by far the best of Menno Simons that has ever been executed as the artist has studied all the existing pictures of Menno as well as the fascinating personality of the real man. The artist was thus able to create a mental image of the Menno of flesh and blood, and when he placed this image on paper he was able to give us not only an artistic etching but we also believe he came nearer the real Menno than ever before.

Pencil sketch by Arend Hendriks of latest portrait of Menno Simons. (See special announcement, p. 48)
Copyright by Arend Hendriks





Singel Kerk, Amsterdam, in eighteenth century, scene of eventful decisions concerning the Mennonite brotherhood in Holland. Here also the Mennonite Theological Seminary and the largest Mennonite Historical Library are located.

DUTCH MENNONITES UNITE DURING CRISIS

BY PIET VAN DER MEULEN

FROM the time of the Reformation through the seventeenth century the Mennonites of the Netherlands were divided into many groups and factions, giving greater emphasis to the differences between them than to the fundamental principles which they had in common. Finally, in 1811, the movement toward unity was consummated in the formation of the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit,* or "General Conference of Dutch Mennonites." Holland was at that time occupied by the French, having been annexed to the Empire in the preceeding year by its Emperor, Napoleon.

Economically, the Netherlands were then prostrate. Trade and commerce had almost been brought to a standstill; only one-third of the interest on the national debt was paid, so that the economic welfare of churches and individuals was seriously impaired. If it is realized that the annual income of the Mennonite church in Amsterdam dropped by 34,000 guilders (and at that time this amount represented a considerably higher value than it does now), everybody will understand that circumstances compelled the exercise of stringent economy. It was a pity that the Mennonites of Amsterdam had to close their orphanage but, fortunately, children could be placed with families. It was also a handicap that one of the two church buildings had to be sold, although services could still be held in one house of worship. It was most unfortunate, however, that the Mennonite Theological Seminary, founded in 1735 and since supported by the Amsterdam Mennonite church, had to be closed. Subsidies given to poor churches had to be reduced or entirely withdrawn. As a result of these measures, the well-being of the whole brotherhood was threatened. Then, at the suggestion of the Mennonite Church in Haarlem, a meeting was convened to investigate the possibilities of, first of all, jointly keeping the seminary functioning; and secondly, giving assistance to the poorer churches which could not afford

a minister of their own. Without much publicity and in a very short time this attempt was crowned with much success. For the two-fold purpose—insuring the continuance of the seminary and of strengthening the financially weak churches—the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit* was founded.

A non-Mennonite professor called this action "an act of faith." We Dutch Mennonites may be considered fortunate, indeed, that in those dark days some men had enough insight and sufficient faith in their cause to make this venture. From that year on, all congregations and factions in our country have, one by one, been united into a single brotherhood; and the preaching of the Gospel has increasingly been done by men with a training received at our own seminary. Our work was also blessed externally to such an extent that the total membership, which numbered only 27,000 members in 1808, as against 160,000 in 1700, no longer diminshed after 1811.

Why Not Sooner

We may inquire why the Dutch Mennonites had not joined hands before. Why had they not united until the number of members had dropped to one-sixth of what it had been before? Why had they not become aware of our responsibility for the heritage of our fathers until they had become as poor as Job? We may, indeed, be glad that a general conference was founded before the Mennonite church became entirely extinct; but is it not humiliating that it required extreme want and the threat of utter decay to bring about Mennonite unity? The Dutch have a meaningful proverb: "One man's fault is another man's lesson." Possibly the story of the origin of the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit* can serve as a lesson to Mennonites in other countries. The lesson to be learned is that it is best to unite before, not after, the time of decline! Above all, it is to be regretted that in 1735, a time when much mischief might have been avoided, no agreement was reached when the Amsterdam church invited forty-two other churches to unite in founding a seminary in order to meet the great shortage of ministers which was being felt throughout the country. In that year there was no longer a difference in opinion as to whether or not ministers ought to possess a seminary education, as there had been in former days when there were such sayings as: "Sending a man to school to study languages in preparation for the ministry is very unbecoming, nay a great error . . . . for then the church would be ruled by fools." (I Cor. 3:19: "The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God"). During the bloody persecutions many of our forefathers who had to account for their religious convictions to the authorities saw how inadequately they could meet their opponents' words. Later on, with a growing appreciation of culture, the want of a better way of preaching was felt; the demand for seminary educated ministers increased still more.

What was wanting in 1735 was unity, so that the excellent plan of the Amsterdam church became stranded on the rocks of discord. If one draws the outlines rather roughly, one can say that the brotherhood was divided into several groups. At the extreme right were the *Zonisten* and on the left the *Lamisten*. The *Zonisten* emphasized the significance of doctrine, whereas the *Lamisten* emphasized "enlivening the divine service." In the eyes of the latter, emphasis on right doctrine was a human device and tended to be either indifferent or actually harmful to religious life. Now it is easy to see what the difficult point of the discussion in 1735 was. The *Zonisten* approved of the plan of founding a seminary, but they wanted to bind the professors to creeds; the *Lamisten* denied the authority of any document outside the Bible. The groups did not agree, and the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit* was not established. However, the seminary was founded by the *Lamisten* Mennonite church of Amsterdam in 1735. It is a credit to the *Lamisten* church of Amsterdam that for seventy-five years they not only kept the seminary going, but, moreover, encouraged and admitted all young men from other churches who were eager to learn and possessed the ability required.

How the Contrasts Softened

Still one may ask: "How is it possible that in 1811 the parties, nonetheless, came to an agreement?" Did one of the parties admit it had been wrong, or was a compromise discovered that was agreeable to both? The answer is that at that time there were no significant differences left. During the eighteenth century they began to pay more attention to the main point which both parties agreed upon rather than to the minor details in which they differed. The slogan of tolerance penetrated everywhere. People were averse to new discords and more and more began to appreciate each other. The age of the *Aufklaerung* was near; it was a time when the spirit of unlimited confidence in human reason prevailed.

We can hardly imagine with how much passion our ancestors devoted themselves to the natural sciences: how, even at the theological seminary, which possessed a large collection of physical instruments, they were enthusiastically experimenting; how zealously they applied themselves to the enlightenment of the man in the street, and how eager they were in promoting democracy and the rights of man! So it will not surprise anybody that when the American War for Independence broke out, they fervently pleaded for the rights of the rebels and greeted the Declaration of Independence with warm sympathy. Both *Lamisten* and *Zonisten* were influenced by the spirit of the age. Holland's famous institutions, such as *Teyler's godgeleerd genootschap,* ("Teyler's theological society") the *Maatschappij tot nut van het algemeen,* ("Social welfare organization") and the *Maatschappij tot redding van drenkelingen,*" (Temperance organization") founded by Mennonites of that day, have borne, and are still bearing, testimony of their insight and ability. In this atmosphere of confidence and trust in progress, of belief in God, virtue, and immortality there was no longer room for quar-

relling about "matters of minor importance." People had become "wiser." Or should we have rejoiced if a minority would have consistently adhered to the "folly" of the Gospel and insisted that the depths and heights of sin and of mercy were not fully grasped during this age of optimistic "enlightenment"?

The Importance of the General Conference

Some years after the foundation of the *Societeit,* a man whose memory will always be honored by us—Samuel Muller—was appointed professor at the seminary. The University of Leydon honored his scholarship by granting him first the doctorate of literature and later the honorary doctorate of theology, an honor till then but seldom granted to one not a member of the state church. He had an authoritative character and was undoubtedly the man who led our brotherhood to a better future.

First of all, he saw how the eighteenth-century rationalism had undermined the strength of the churches; he understood that deliverance could only be expected by returning to the Gospel. Together with his colleague, the delicate, somewhat pietistically minded Wopko Cnoop Koopmans, he taught the students how to use the Bible as the source of their thinking and preaching. He also revived the interest in the heritage of the brotherhood and gave the impulse to scholarly studies of the history of the Mennonites. Some of his pupils (de Hoop Scheffer and Blaupot ten Cate) were inspired by him to further investigations. In order to raise the standards of the Mennonite brotherhood to a level comparable with the other denominations in our country, he urged that all churches have seminary-trained ministers. This goal was still realized in his lifetime.

The standard of education attained in this period has by no means fallen under the successors of Muller and Koopmans, van Gilse and Hoekstra, de Hoop Scheffer and Le Cosquino Debussy, Cramer and Kuehler have spread the fame of the Seminary beyond our brotherhood and given it international repute. The bond of the

Napoleon entering Amsterdam. In times of crises, Dutch Mennonites joined hands in common tasks.

Samuel Muller, 1785-1875. Influential educator at Seminary and leader of Dutch Mennonite conference.

Mennonite Theological Seminary with the University of Amsterdam grew closer and closer. The students had always been encouraged, nay, obliged to frequent the lectures of the most famous university professors; and in 1877 Hoekstra and de Hoop Scheffer, professors of the seminary, were also appointed professors to the University of Amsterdam. If I add that the library of the seminary, which has always been open to the student, has a world-wide reputation, I think I have at least given a cursory impression of the importance of theological instruction at our seminary.

Still, all these advantages cannot be compared with the opportunity the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit* has given us to become a greater unity. The impulse to unite did not come through creedal channels, but rather through the longing to be mutually helpful, and through the feeling of responsibility for each other, without the pressure of external compulsion. The rapidity with which the *Algemene Doopsgezinde Societeit* secured the respect and support of churches and individuals was quite remarkable. It was supported not only by the gifts of people of the upper classes, but also by smaller contributions of less wealthy people. The members soon began to identify the *Societeit* with the brotherhood and so the feeling of unity and gratitude prevailed. What would have become of us if it had not been founded? The *Societeit* has become more and more the very token of our unity round which —as the late war has again proved—all are rallying.

A Thrilling Story from an Old Diary

BY WALTER ADRIAN

THE EARLY morning sun was shining brightly as the heavily loaded wagon made its way slowly along a Prussian country road approximately sixty miles south of Danzig along the Vistula River in the year 1839. On either side of the road the morning haze was gradually lifting from the dewy pastures and the recently plowed fields. It was the last day of August and amidst the haze a sense of serenity seemed to surround the land, a sign of approaching autumn.

But within the wagon all was not serene. As the driver urged his team of faithful horses along the road northeast from Kommerau to the Montau community, his tone of voice and halting gestures betrayed his calm face. His wife at his side also was far from calm. As her heart beat wildly she clasped more firmly to her breast the sleeping child in her arms. Even the nine-year-old Eva and the five-year-old Jacob, who were standing behind their parents, sensed the air of expectancy and quietly but eagerly kept their eyes open wide for the new adventure that seemingly lay ahead.

The decision to leave his native Prussia where he and his wife had been born and reared in the Mennonite settlements of Kommerau and Montau and where his parents only a few years ago had been laid to rest, was not an easy one for the young Jacob Adrian. Now he and his family were on the first span of their long journey to their new home, Russia, in company with several other Mennonite families. Jacob recalled how, after many a late session of discussion and prayer with his beloved Anna, they had decided to seek a new home in the Russian Mennonite settlement so that their children might be free from military service. Then, too, letters from his

aunt in Russia had assured them of better and more abundant means of livelihood and freedom from the ever-increasing tax burden.

Here they were driving along the road towards Anna's home farther north in the Montau settlement, where they were to bid a final farewell to relatives and friends. "I must control my feelings of uneasiness," thought Jacob as he reached for his wife's hand and pressed it firmly in his own. "Poor Anna, how it will pain her to leave her dear parents and brother Daniel behind as she goes with me to our new home."

To Jacob it seemed only yesterday that he and Anna had stood before Elder Peter Foth, Anna's father, and pledged their life and love to each other forever. How kind and loyal she had been these eleven years of their married life! How patiently and faithfully she had been as mother to their children—one daughter and two fine sons to carry on the family name.

As they neared the Montau settlement, the gelding and the blind mare changed their trot to a walk and soon made the familiar turn into the well-kept farm yard of Elder Peter Foth. Several wagons were already in the yard and amongst the men standing near the barn Jacob could recognize his father-in-law, Elder Peter Foth, his brother-in-law, Daniel, and his own brother Franz, as well as Johann Goertz, the leader and guide for the Russian trek. Goertz, a resident of the South Russian Molotschna village of Schardau, had come to visit Prussian friends and relatives in the spring of 1839 and was now returning home while serving as a guide to the new group of homeseekers.

Farewell to Friends and Kinsfolk

More members of the migration party as well as friends and relatives arrived, filling the farm yard with an assortment of wagons. After a while the Elder Foth made his way through the crowd of men in the yard and invited them into the house for the farewell meal. As soon as the men had taken their places at the long tables arranged for the occasion, the women and children also gathered and took their places. The group was hushed to silence as Elder Foth bowed his head and quietly asked the Lord's blessing on this simple noonday meal.

Upon the conclusion of the meal, Elder Foth arose, took his well-worn Bible from its accustomed place and read a portion of the Scriptures. Anna's heart seemed to break when she realized she would probably never hear her father's familiar voice again at the regular Sunday morning services in the small Mennonite church here at Montau. She recalled how happy and proud she had been when her father thirteen years ago, had been chosen a minister and how, four years later, he had been chosen by the same congregation to be their elder. Now, as the tears welled in her eyes, she silently prayed that God might, in the years to come, safely keep her dear father and mother and her brother, Daniel.

After reading the Scripture passage Elder Foth bowed his head as he quietly invoked the blessing of the Heavenly Father. He could hear the soft weeping of his own wife, Sara, and of other mothers whose sons and daughters, too, were going to seek new homes in far away Russia. At the close of the prayer, the assemblage sang a familiar and well-loved hymn: *Ach! bleib mit Deiner Gnade bei uns, Herr Jesus Christ! Dass uns hinfort nicht schade des boesen Feindes List.*

When this hymn was ended, the men arose, left the house, and began to hitch their teams to the wagons, while the women and children came and took their places in the wagons. There were in the wagon with leader Johann Goertz young people from the various surrounding Mennonite villages: Malwiene, a former Lutheran girl from Koenigsberg, Sara Dick, Heinrich Bartel, Cornelius Ziemes (Siemens), and a son and daughter of Cornelius Kliewer.

Another wagon was driven by Jacob Sudermann of the Kleine Werder, accompanied by his son Abraham. His "hired-hand," Heinrich Block of Nieder Gruppe, drove another wagon loaded with provisions. The Herman Sudermanns and small daughter, also of the Klein Werder, drove another wagon.

The fifth wagon held young Herman, Jacob, and Sara Sudermann, and Heinrich Bartz (Bartsch) and his sister. Wilhelm Ewert drove another wagon in the caravan.

It was now ten-thirty and the haze had disappeared from the pastures and fields so that Jacob and Anna, in the last wagon of the group, could get a long, last look at the countryside they knew and loved. As they gazed, they drove on in heavy silence southward until they came to the familiar inn, *Der Rothe Krug* (the Red Jug), in the Graudenz vicinity.

Here the party halted while Elder Foth and his wife, who had accompanied them thus far, made their way among the group in a last word of farewell. They kissed each of their grandchildren and then, overcome by emotion and unable to say a word, merely clasped the hands of Jacob and Anna and wept quietly. To Anna it seemed she could never let go of her mother's work-worn hands. Her father put his arms about them both and after a moment gently led the mother away while Jacob helped the weeping Anna into the wagon. Jacob's sister, her two children, and Anna's brother Daniel also came and bade them goodbye. The party again resumed its journey and came into Graudenz via the Vistuala River ferry.

As the afternoon wore on, the children—Eva, Jacob, and Franz—fell asleep on their pallets in the wagons, while Jacob and Anna reminisced about the familiar

(Continued on page 26)

Boys And Dogs

The world is young to boys and dogs;
Each morning is as new
As all the untried things a boy
Can think about to do.

—From *Far Roads* by Rachel Albright

Franz Adrain, son of Jacob, and wife; grandfather and grandmother of the writer of this article.

A THRILLING STORY

(Continued from page 24)

scenes along the way. Jacob's brother Franz, who accompanied them on horseback for the first day of their journey, often rode alongside carrying on a conversation with them.

The Flood Waters Threaten

At nine o'clock that night the party arrived in the little village of Gogolin. Here Jacob and Anna were overnight guests at the hospitable Jacob Goertz home. The next morning flood-waters were threatening the road to Graudenz as well as the fields of some of the Mennonite farmers. Jacob's brother, Franz, who had accompanied them thus far, immediately decided to return to his Kommerau home while Jacob, also on horseback, decided to see him safely back to Graudenz. When they approached the city some time before noon, the Vistula River water mark showed 15 feet and 8 inches. Fearing that he would be stranded here, Jacob hastily returned to his family and the caravan at Gogolin.

When he galloped into the Goertz yard late that Sunday afternoon, he found the children playing near the house. Anna was with the men and women in the slowly flooding field spading up potatoes. He stabled his horse and rushed out to the field to help them.

After the strenuous Sunday work, it was agreed to rest a day before resuming the journey. Accompanied by Ohm Wichert and several friends, the caravan left early Tuesday morning. At *Schatten Krug* (Shadow Inn) they stopped and *Ohm* Wichert, who had become elder of the Mennonite church just the previous year, gave a short farewell sermon.

Here five young men with team and wagon joined the party for the remainder of the trek: Heinrich and Jacob Franz and Cornelius Wichert, all of Lunau; Johan Tiahrt, of Jamrau; and Peter Bartel, of Gogolin. The entire caravan now consisted of eight wagons and some thirty-five persons. After brief farewells, they made their way along the well-traveled road to Kulmsee.

Arriving there late at night, the party camped near the north city gates and the next morning resumed their trip. That afternoon they reached the ancient Hanseatic League city of Thorn, crossing the Vistula River by ferry into the city proper. All were eager to reach friends for the night in the neighboring village of Nieschewska; therefore they spent little time in Thorn but hurried on.

The next morning the friends and relatives bade them goodbye after a short but impressive farewell service led by *Ohm* Dietrich Gerbrand. In later years Anna often recalled the Bible passage he used as parting words: "If you will keep my commandments, I will be your God and you shall be my sons and daughters."

Realizing that the group had a long trip ahead, several of the Nieschewska brethren hitched their own teams to the wagons and took them to the Prussian-Polish border. (Poland as a separate country did not exist but had been merely a Russian province since 1831.) They arrived at the border eleven o'clock. Upon the return of the Nieschewska friends, the party prepared to wait their turn for border inspection by Prussian officials. Eva, Jacob, and Franz and the rest of the children were glad to have this opportunity to run about and play.

The inspection procedure began at one o'clock, the inspectors taking their time until they were invited to partake freely of the caravan's ample supply of ham and cheese. At eight o'clock the party came to Bruzdomin to camp for the night. Being now in a foreign land, it was deemed proper and wise to post two of the men to keep watch for the night.

All arose early the next morning, and six o'clock found them on the road again. Soon after passing through the village of Lovitchek, the group arrived at the Polish port of entry, where a Cossack lieutenant inspected their passes, wagons, and contents. While this was going on the party prepared and ate breakfast. They were soon approved by the lieutenant and went on their way.

Soon the days of travel fell into a fixed routine—a

routine that consisted of early rising, breakfasting and the feeding and watering of the horses after several miles of travel, a halt early in the afternoon and a rest period for an hour or so, then more travel, and, just before sundown, a halt for supper and the night's rest.

However, not all of the trip was mere monotony. Travel in those days was difficult anywhere but certainly no less so in Polish Russia. There was the constant danger of a daylight attack by armed bands that roamed the country. There was the simple method of ambushing travelers as they came unsuspectingly along a lonesome road. Or, under cover of night a traveler's horse might disappear, leaving only a trail of hoofmarks. Either method usually brought results and the peace-loving unarmed Mennonites were often easy prey. Small wonder that the caravan's nightwatchmen performed their duties in a most conscientious manner.

At Czerneberg, a few days later, the entire party rested and fellowshipped with Mennonite friends for a week-end. Jacob and Anna were guests at the home of *Lehrer* Peter Ratzlaff. When Monday morning came, even the children were reluctant to leave for they had thoroughly enjoyed this unrestricted freedom and the special attention and feed that *Mumke* Ratzlaff had given them. It reminded them of their own grandmother Foth, left behind in Prussia. They long remembered this fine hospitality at Czerneberg.

Travel soon became easier for they were now on the paved highway leading to Warsaw. Leader Goertz, surprised at the amount of travel on the highway, soon discovered from fellow-travelers that the Warsaw *Jahrmarkt* (annual fair) was in the offing. In order to avoid the crowded streets, the group turned left before reaching Warsaw and crossed the Vistula River.

Here all eight wagons were carefully driven onto a huge river barge. All watched the shore line recede as the huge barge slowly and cumbersomely made its way out into the Vistula. After an hour and a half, the barge expelled its load on the opposite shore. The caravan then drove on to the village of Lamaczin where a small group of Mennonites from the Stuhm region (Prussia) had settled. Jacob and Anna were invited to share the hospitality of the Heinrich Penner home. While the children romped and played, the parents found relaxation visiting with the Penners and answering their many questions about Prussia and the Mennonites there.

The next day the travelers approached Praga, the large southeastern suburb of Warsaw, and again resumed travel on the highway. After several days of travel during which they passed through the towns of Garwolin, and Chelm, they came to the village of Zebera where they left the highway at a point 170 miles beyond Warsaw. Late that afternoon they came to the Polish Russian boundary.

Entering Russia Proper

Speculation about their new homeland which they hoped to enter the next day was repeatedly in the conversation around the campfire that evening. The border officials notified Goertz that his group should be ready for inspection at five the next morning and so all of them, save the watchmen, retired at an earlier hour than usual. By seven o'clock the following morning, they had been officially approved, were loaded into a river barge and taken over the Bug River. On the opposite side other boundary officials, after careful inspection, allowed them to drive on to the next village, Ustilug.

Franz Adrain and wife who remained in Prussia. Franz, a brother of Jacob, turned back at Gogolin.

One evening, after passing through Torozin and through Lubski via a long bridge over the Styr River, the party was joined at sundown by another group of Prussian Mennonites from the Werder who were also on their way to Russia to seek future homes. The two groups enjoyed a common supper and then visited as they sat around the glowing campfire. Travel experiences were shared; plans for their new life in Russia were discussed.

Continuing on their way, the next morning, they halted at Ostrog till four in the afternoon, for it was Sunday and they wished to travel very little on the Lord's day. Anna recalled that her father had once told her about the Karolswalde Mennonite settlement at Ostrog, but no one in the party seemed to know of anyone there nor the location of the settlement.

On the twenty-seventh of September, in the early morning, the caravan drove into the city of Berdichev, where they stopped for a day's rest. Wilhelm Ewert and his passengers, deciding to pay a visit to the Mennonite settlement in this vicinity, drove to Michalin the next morning while the remaining seven wagons proceeded on their way to the Molotschna.

Thus for many more days the journey continued. Ahead of them lay the Chortitza Mennonite colony. The party enjoyed several days of gracious hospitality with these Mennonites who had left Prussia fifty years earlier and settled here in the Ukraine.

It was the tenth of October, 1839, when, in the early morning, the weary group finally approached the village of Halbstadt, on the Molotschna. In the early dawn they could see the outline of the distant village. Lest they enter the Molotschna colony in a hungry mood, they stopped, after crossing the Molotschna River, ate breakfast, and fed and watered the horses at the river's edge.

When they drove through the main Halbstadt street a little later, the sun was rising, but activity in the village itself seemed nil. In view of this fact, Goertz sent word down the line that no stop would be made here but all would proceed to Alexanderwohl.

As they drove through the Molotschna countryside, Jacob and Anna were mildly surprised to find it so different from the former Prussian home of these people. In Prussia there had been a continuous struggle to keep the water from the lands while here the fields were dry and in need of moisture. Their former farm homes lay scattered throughout the pasture and farm lands while here the closely-knit village pattern was strictly followed. There were no ancient fortresses or castles here amidst the rolling countryside but only the flat unbroken skyline of the steppes stretching as far as eye could see.

Near noon the party arrived at Alexanderwohl feeling very much at home as they drove down the tree lined *Dorfstrasse* (village street). Here was the familiar Prussian architecture with house, barn, granary, and farm machine shop all under one roof. Here were the front-yard flower gardens and in the rear the fruit trees and vegetable garden banked with rows of bee-hives. At one home they noticed a large pile of watermelons under a mulberry tree in the rear yard.

Sometime later the caravan came to a rest stop at the Gnadenfeld home of F. Pankratz, the daughter and son-in-law of leader Goertz. They were almost immediately surrounded by Gnadenfeld people who plied them with questions about Prussian relatives and friends. Four years ago these Gnadenfeld Mennonites had left Neumark, Prussia, and settled here. Wilhelm Lange, elder of the church, arrived, and in his congenial manner welcomed the group heartily. Feeling quite at home, Heinrich and Jacob Franz, Cornelius Wichert, Johan Tiahrt, and Peter Bartel decided to stay with the Langes and visit for a while.

Jacob and Anna continued their way with Goertz to his home village, Schardau. The joy of the returning father to his family was indeed great and made Jacob and Anna feel only more the pangs of separation from their loved ones. That night as in many previous nights, they slept outdoors in their wagon with their family of three.

With the spreading of the news through Schardau that Johan Goertz had returned from Prussia, friends gathered at his home to hear an account of his journey and get direct information about their Prussian relatives. In the meantime, Jacob and Anna decided to locate their aunt, Mrs. Abraham Franzen, who lived somewhere in Schardau. En route, Jacob remembered a letter that had been entrusted to him by a Prussian Mennonite to a relative, Stephen Kerber, in Schardau. After locating the Kerber residence and being ushered into the *Grosze Stube* (parlor), they were asked questions about their native Prussia until their heads fairly swam. At Kerber's insistence they stayed for an excellent dinner of Borscht.

That afternoon while the children were napping in the wagon, Kerber accompanied Jacob and Anna to the Abraham Franzen home. There were no signs of activity as they approached the residence. Kerber observed with a chuckle that, no doubt, the Franzens were taking the usual after-dinner nap. "I'll have to knock vigorously to rouse them," he said. "They are sound sleepers."

After repeated knockings, Mrs. Franzen appeared at the front door and admitted the guests. A moment later Mr. Franzen appeared. The Franzens were scrutinizing Jacob and Anna, hoping to recall where they had met this young couple before. It was when Jacob referred to Mrs. Franzen as *Taunte* (aunt) that the discovery of who they might be dawned on them. With tears of joy Mrs. Franzen hugged and kissed her nephew and his wife. There was no lag in the conversation from then until after *Vesper* when Jacob and Anna hurried back to their children.

A few evenings later, after Anna had put the children to bed, she was sitting on the wagon-tongue, resting from the day's activities in the cool evening air. While looking about her on the unfamiliar scenes revealed in the clear moonlight, her thoughts raced back to her former home and family. How far away they seemed and almost unreal as though in another world. Perhaps they had never existed at all. Or if they were real, then what was she doing here in these moonlit surroundings feeling lonely and forsaken? She was suddenly roused from her reverie when she heard the rapidly approaching footsteps of her husband. "Anna, Anna, where are you? I've got good news," he cried, grasping her hands. "*Ohm* Schmidt, next door here, has offered us living quarters. Anna, we've got a home."

Establishing a New Home

So their first home in Russia was the small house in *Ohm* Abraham Schmidt's back yard where they worked

(Continued on page 39)

Auf dem Baschtan

VON ARNOLD DYCK

„Kommst du mit, Hans?"

Hans sieht seinen Bruder fragend an: „Wohin?"

„Ich trage dem Baschtanwächter das Essen hinaus und will mir gleich einmal die Arbusen ansehen, es möchten da schon welche reif sein."

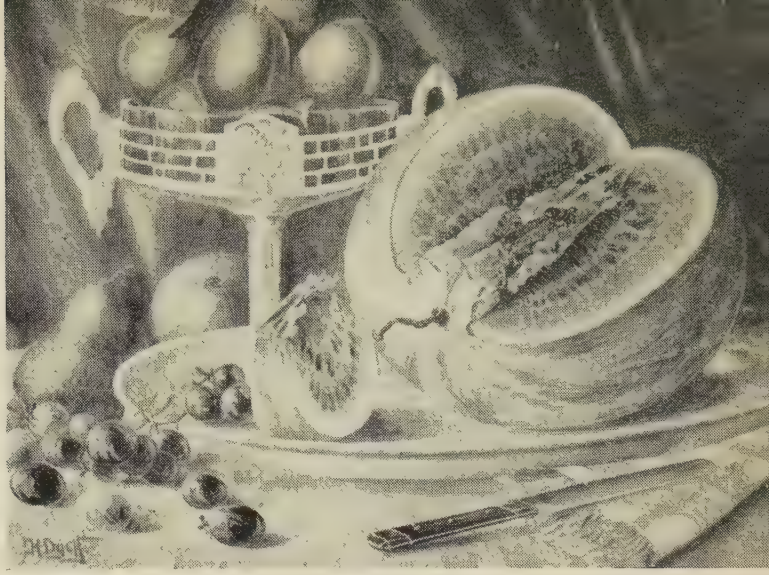
Natürlig will Hans mit. So ein Spaziergang mit Berend am frühen Sonntagmorgen in die Baschtanfelder kann sehr nett werden.

Die Brüder schlagen den schmalen Weg ein, der sich hinter den Gärten das Dorf entlang zieht. Es ist sehr früh, und das Dorf liegt noch in tiefer Sonntagsmorgenruhe. Aber Leben ist doch schon da, denn die Hochfelder sind keine Langschläfer. Auch an den Sonntagen sind sie mit der Sonne zugleich aus dem Bett. Man hört heute aber nicht das geschäftige Treiben des Alltags, und nur vereinzelt dringen Laute des erwachenden Lebens von den Höfen. Hier kreischt ein Brunnenrad, dort knarrt eine Tür, ein Pferd wiehert, sich wundernd, warum heute die Krippe so lange leer bleibt, junge, unerfahrene Hähne krähen ohne weiteren Anlaß. Alles Stimmen, die man auch am Sonntag hört, und die die feierliche Ruhe weiter nicht stören . . .

Die Brüder kommen ins offene Feld. Etwa eine Werst vom Dorf fangen die Baschtanfelder an. Sie liegen alle nebeneinander. Und auf denselben Aeckern sind auch die Kartoffeln und der Mais. Hier prangt noch alles in saftigem Grün, und diese „Brache" ist der einzige dunkle Fleck, der Abwechslung in das endlose Gelb der Stoppelfelder bringt.

Schweigend schreiten die beiden den Weg entlang. Es ist hier draußen sehr still, nichts stört die Sonntagsruhe. Aus dem nahen Schirokoje tönt schwach Glockengeläute herüber. Gleich beim ersten Baschtanfeld empfängt die Brüder der herbe Duft, den die unzähligen gelben, teller-großen Kürbisblüten ausströmen, der charakteristische Geruch des Baschtan. Er begleitet die beiden nun schon, bis sie an ihr eignenes Feld kommen, das etwa in der Mitte zwischen den andern liegt. Tief atmen sie die so gewürzte Luft ein. Hans aber möchte noch mehr von dem Duft, ab und zu springt er zwischen die Ranken, steckt seine Nase in einen Blütenkelch und saugt die Lungen voll. Berend lacht über seine gelbe Nase, an der Blütenstaub hängen geblieben ist.

Dann kommt die erste Wächterbude. Es sind ihrer drei auf dem Felde, in gleichgroßen Abständen von einander. Kleine Strohhütten sind es, zu welchen das Dorf die Sparen, die direkt auf der Erde stehen, und das Dachstroh liefert. Aufbauen müßen sie sich die Wächter selber. Für Hans sind diese Wächterbuden ein Stück Steppenromantik. Gern steht er da ein Viertelstündchen



Aquarell von Lehrer Heinrich Dyck, Chortitza.

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vor dem Loch, das die Tür darstellt, und lugt in das Innere, während der alte Russe die mitgebrachten Sachen—einen Vorschtsch, eine Milchsuppe, oder, wenn es, wie heute, grade Sonntag ist, auch Koteletten oder sonst ein Braten, und den Kaffee—in seine Gefässe tut. . . . .

Die Brüder sind bei ihrem Baschtan angelangt. Da liegt er vor ihnen, etwa eine halbe Desjatine groß. An einer Seite, am Rain, drei Reihen Melonen, der Rest sind Arbusen. Es sind die einzelnen Reihen nicht mehr zu erkennen, so sind die Pflanzen durcheinandergerankt. Man muß schon weite Sprünge machen, wenn man von einer freien Stelle zur andern gelangen will, ohne die Ranken zu zertreten. Hier und da steht ein Büschel Unkraut, das man absichtlich stehen gelassen, damit sich die Ranken daran festklammern können, um vom Sturm nicht durcheinandergeworfen zu werden. Noch sind viele Blüten an den Ranken, aber auch fast ausgewachsene Arbusen liegen da schon. Jedenfalls sind sie bereits so groß, daß man sie auf ihre Reife hin untersuchen möchte. Hans knipst an eine der größten. Er weiß, es muß ledern klingen, wenn sie reif sein soll. Den Ton hat er richtig in den Ohren. Dieser hier aber ist noch weit davon entfernt. Aber so ganz hoch und scharf ist er doch auch nicht mehr.

„Berend, diese hier ist fast reif, vielleicht ganz. Komm mal her!"

Berend steht grade vor einer andern. Er kommt aber doch herbei, knipst. „Hmm," sagt er und geht dann wieder zurück zu der seinen. Hans folgt ihm, knipst nun da, sagt auch erst „Hmm," aber dann nach kurzem Erwägen sehr bestimmt: „Nein, Berend, meine ist reifer." Beide gehen nun zurück zu der „reiferen." Erst knipsen sie noch wieder abwechselnd. Der Ton bleibt wie er war. Dann drehen sie die Arbuse um. Sie müßte unten eigentlich gelb sein—oben ist sie schwarzgrün—, wenns mit dem Reifsein seine Richtigkeit haben soll. Sie ist nicht gelb, kaum daß sich eine Bläße andeutet. Hmm. Die Ranke, and der sie liegt, ist frisch und saftig, keine Spur von beginnendem Abtrocknen. Und das „Löffelchen" am

(Fortsetzung auf Seite 39.)

Entrance to the Johann Cornies estate in the village of Orloff, South Russia. Taken in 1891.

JOHANN CORNIES--A GREAT PIONEER

A Centenary Tribute (1848-1948)

BY WALTER QUIRING

JOHANN CORNIES, who was born June 20, 1789, at Baerwalde near Danzig, belonged to the second large group of emigrants from this community which made its way to Russia from 1803 to 1805. This group founded the Molotschna Colony in the province of Taurida.

One of these groups spent the winter in the Chortitza Colony, settled in 1789. Here the sixteen-year-old Johann Cornies, under the supervision of his father, was in charge of the distillery. He had a unique opportunity to observe the civil and church life of the community and also to become acquainted with the hardships and difficulties of pioneer life. At that time a dispute raged against the former delegates of the settlement, Hoeppner and Bartsch.

After a two-year sojourn at Chortitza, the Cornies family headed toward the place chosen for the new colony on the banks of the Molotschna, where they took over a homestead with sixty-five dessiatines of land in the newly settled village of Orloff.

A large number of the settlers were not blessed with wealth. In order to make more rapid progress economically, Father Cornies took up other work. He had always been interested in the art of healing and had acquired some skill therein. He had also not neglected to take his medical books along from Prussia. Healing herbs were to be found in abundance on the steppes, and so Father Cornies became the colony "doctor." His work was not without good results, for he was an alert observer, did his work carefully, and had acquired a keen knowledge of human nature on his voyages as a sailor which had taken him as far as India via the Cape of Good Hope. Soon his fame spread far and wide among Germans, Ukrainians, and the nomadic Tatarian tribes. Among the Ukrainians, he was soon called not Cornies but *Lekarenko* (doctor). In spite of his medical activities, Father Cornies did not neglect his farm; and so made rapid economic progress. At his death, in 1814, he left each of his sons 4,000 rubles in cash besides much other property.

The Beginning of a Career

Johann Cornies, the oldest of the four brothers, became self-supporting soon after the immigration. He worked as a laborer for a miller at Orloff. After a year, he had saved some money and left the mill in order to become completely independent. He acquired a vehicle, bought butter, eggs, hams, and other agricultural goods from the farmers, and sold them at a profit in the cities of Simferopol, Feodosiya, and Sevastopol. Considering the difficult and hazardous transportation conditions of that pioneer time, even this little undertaking was an epoch-making act. With prudence and industry, Cornies, in a period of three years, had saved 7,000 rubles and gave up marketing produce, which had only served as a means toward an end.

A good school education was denied Cornies. In spite of the many labors of the pioneer time, he used every opportunity to learn and extend his knowledge. In the distillery at Chortitza, on the floursacks in Orloff, and in his lonely journeys across the wide Russian steppes, he was always accompanied by a few good books. While the slowly trotting horses sought the road, he lost himself in history; stimulated by the travel descriptions of his father, he learned to know distant lands and peoples. He studied Russian and German grammar, and during his long night journeys he became acquainted with the starry heavens.

In 1811 Cornies bought a homestead for himself at Orloff. His saved earnings were enough to erect a stately house and to establish his farm buildings. But Cornies' plans reached far beyond the boundaries of his own village. He soon recognized the favorable opportunities which the steppes presented for cattlebreeding, and he promptly began to breed sheep. At a very low price he rented the fallow-lying government lands for pasture, beginning near the settlement, but finally moving as far as 65 miles from the settlement with his herds.

The Estate Jushanlee

In 1830 the rancher Cornies leased 3,500 dessiatines (9,000 acres) of government land along the stream Jushanlee, where he had until then maintained a small sheep ranch, and founded an estate named after the stream. Six years later Czar Nicholas I gave him 500 dessiatines of this land as a reward for his services in the improvement of agriculture. Here Cornies first began cattle-breeding, but he gradually began to cultivate 270 dessiatines of the land. He also used six dessiatines of the land to start a large tree nursery so that he could furnish the colonists with seedlings. Also he began the planting of a forest which in a few years numbered 68,000 trees.

As early as 1816, Cornies undertook his first successful attempts with horse-breeding. He recognized that the cattle needed decided improvement, for until 1814 the colonists kept only the offspring of the cattle which they had brought along from Germany. Cornies acquired some purebred bulls for breeding purposes and gave the progeny to the colonists. By 1847 his own livestock consisted of 500 horses, 8,000 sheep and 200 cattle of Holland stock.

Cornies' office on his estate in Orloff from where he directed activities of the Agricultural Society.

View of the stables on the Johann Cornies model farm at Jushanlee, a 9,000-acre ranch.

Two years after the establishment of Jushanlee, Cornies purchased an estate, Tashchenak, of 3,500 dessiatines near Melitopol and ten years later another estate, Verigin, bordering it, of 1,600 dessiatines so that he finally cultivated about 25,000 acres. His own brickyard produced the bricks necessary for the construction of his many buildings, while the tile works and gutter-tile factory yielded worth-while profits.

President of Agricultural Society

That Cornies' activities could not be limited to the field of agriculture in one small settlement was self-evident. His influence made itself felt in the Chortitza Colony as well as in other German and non-German settlements in South Russia.

The Russian government soon took note of Cornies' large-scale activities. By 1817 it had made the 28-year-old Cornies the representative of all Mennonites in South Russia. Serving in this capacity it was his duty to find suitable places of settlement for his fellow countrymen emigrating from Germany.

The leader of the highest board of the settlers, the president of the Welfare Committee for the Foreign Settlers in Russia, always felt himself compelled to extol the fruitful work of Cornies in his reports to Petersburg. The Department of Crownlands appointed him as lifelong chairman of the Society for the Effective Promotion of Afforestation, Horticulture, Silk Industry, and Vine-Culture, later called Agricultural Society, which was founded on the suggestion of the Welfare Committee. To this name was soon added, For the Improvement of Agriculture, Industry, and Education. The settlers of Chortitza also founded an agricultural society in which Cornies' influence was made felt by his position as authorized agent over all the Mennonites.

New Industries

Cornies was tireless in opening to the colonists new possibilities for industry. However, his initiation of silkworm and tobacco industries did not prove successful in the long run, mainly, because cattle-breeding and agriculture were more profitable. For a long time, the silk industry, especially, was Cornies' special concern. Two hundred and seventy-families from the thirty-five villages were engaged in this industry in the year 1845, and six years later the earnings consisted of 30,687 rubles. In order to develop this industry on a large scale, he built a school in Orloff to instruct the girls of the colony in the art of silk-reeling. Finally, it proved impossible to reel the produced silk with the available help. Added to that, the silkworm plague and strong Italian and French competition caused this industry much damage. It was finally given up.

The tobacco industry underwent a similar fate even though in 1845 a large crop of tobacco was harvested by 157 farmers in thirty-two villages. Also the culture of corn did not progress rapidly; the colonists valued summer fallow more highly than the profit from growing corn. Growing of flax made no headway at the Molotschna, even though, in 1847, some 20,736 pounds were harvested in that region and 2,253 persons were engaged in spinning the flax. However, the fact that these cultures were attempted in those strenuous pioneer years is evidence of the vision and the resourcefulness of their instigator.

The growing of grain soon showed itself to be the most important agricultural enterprise of the immigrants. Not nearly all of the colonists had been farmers in Prussia; and, added to that, the Prussian methods could not be applied to the virgin steppes without modification. In this, Cornies was pioneer and trailblazer. With tireless zeal he devoted himself to the often costly attempts to find the methods best suited for the existing agrciultural conditions.

For example, he recognized that it was essential to preserve the moisture in the soil during the winter

He promoted livestock-breeding, forestry, horticulture, and grain growing on lands of 25,000 acres.

because of the lack of rainfall. Thus he became the discoverer of summer fallow. As early as 1835 he began the practice of summer fallowing in the Molotschna. This practice proved to be a monumental contribution! Three years later the colony began the system of four-crop rotation.

Shelterbelts, Orchards, and Irrigation

By damming up the streams of the steppes, which in summer were largely dry, Cornies succeeded in irrigating the meadows which tremendously improved pastureland as well as the hay crop. In 1845 about 4,200 acres of hay meadow were irrigated. Because of this, the yield of the crop was more than doubled. By making earthen dams Cornies formed ponds in which snow and rain water gathered and which were of importance for the proper maintenance of cattle.

Cornies exercised special care in the planting of forests. He understood their significance for treeless steppes; and, when necessary, promoted his long-range purpose with ruthless force. In 1845 over a half-million fruit and forest trees were found in the Molotschna alone, to which 300,000 mulberry trees were added. Six years later there were over five million trees in forty-seven villages.

The planting of fruit trees near the houses broke the monotony of the settlements and gave them a more inviting appearance. Cornies also ordered the planting of trees along the country roads according to the German pattern.

But the watchful eye of the restless, energetic *Vorsitzer* (president) as he was called by the settlers also was concerned about the smaller, less important matters. Thus he instructed the settlers in growing of vegetables and flowers. He was also concerned about the beautification of the villages and the homesteads. The homes and farm-buildings should be made not only practical and durable, but also beautiful. For example, he stressed that the front gables should be made of burnt bricks. Fruit trees were planted on the comparatively large spaces between the village street and the house, and hedges and rows of trees were planted on the back of the long lot. All the fences, houses, and gables had to be painted; Cornies himself instructing the settlers in the combination of durable colors.

Agricultural Training

His far-reaching authority was often felt in the private life of the settlers. Opportunities for the same presented themselves only too often, such as when, for example, a colonist did not want to adjust himself to one of the established rules, or when a young man would rather loaf than help his father on the farm. Such sons of the colony were hired out to efficient and stern farmers where they were trained the hard way.

That the government put much confidence in his educational abilities is shown by the fact that it placed a number of young Russians in his hands every year for instruction in the practice of agriculture. In 1839 Cornies accepted sixteen lads, while his wife took four Russian girls into the house to instruct them in the domestic arts. These "government lads" were also taught how to read and write at the Cornies' home. At the end of their instructional period they each received 200 rubles from the government to subsidize their own beginning. The government valued Cornies' instruction so highly that it even exempted these boys from military training. Later these Russians, who had been instructed by Cornies, organized in special model villages, because older Russians resented the introduction of improvements and often opposed the efforts of the authorities and the "government lads."

The value of such training was soon clear and young Russians were also given to the Mennonite farmers in the villages. The influence of these immigrants on their Russian neighbors was unmistakably felt. For example,

potatoes were unknown to the Russians until the Mennonites introduced them there. Cornies himself often supervised the growth of this crop. In the outlying districts he placed Mennonite overseers who gave directions for planting the tuberous plant. Many Russian and Ukrainian farmers were sent to the Mennonite settlements to learn how to raise potatoes.

Cornies' large-scale plan to provide the Molotschna Colony with a trade and handicraft center could not be entirely realized during his lifetime. However, he founded the village Neuhalbstadt, a business and handicraft settlement. The new settlement progressed only slowly, partly because of the opposition of the farmers in Halbstadt. Only after Cornies' death did it develop into an industrial city. However, D. Schlatter, a Swiss who often travelled through the southern Ukraine between 1802 and 1822, reported a cloth factory in Halbstadt.

In 1842 fifty Hutterite families emigrated from Raditshev, of the Tshernigov province, near Melitopol and founded the villages Huttertal and Johannesruh. Under Cornies' leadership these villages made rapid progress. His ideas influenced not only their economy but their religious and family life as well. A custom of old standing among the Hutterites was that the parents chose the husband for a daughter without considering the girl's wishes or inclinations. A case in which a girl decidedly objected to marrying an elderly widower chosen by her parents caused Cornies to put an end to this custom. He insisted that young girls should give a declaration before their wedding that the marriage was not compulsory.

Because the Swedish colonies at Berislav, in the province of Kherson, were disintegrating, they were also placed under Cornies' leadership in 1846. He immediately removed those who were incompetent from the administrative body and put capable and responsible men in the most important positions. Soon an improvement was noticeable in this settlement. Cornies was also responsible for placing exemplary Mennonite families in the newly established Jewish settlements in the province of Kherson.

The settling down of the Nogais which began in 1809 was also largely due to Cornies' influence. From 1835 on, 17,000 of these nomadic Nogais had settled because of Cornies' efforts. Later, they emigrated to Turkey. It appears that Cornies' idea spread to the neighboring Lutheran settlement of Prischib. Also, the administrative council of the Groszliebental colony, in the province Kherson, visited Cornies and became thoroughly acquainted with the conditions there. Upon the wish of the government, Cornies travelled to the distant Kalmuck steppes and advised these tribes as to how they could best cease their nomadic life and settle down. Cornies' provision also spread to the Dukhobors and Tatars. He likewise helped the Molokans in their agricultural efforts.

Special Honors

That Cornies' influence and activities spread beyond the limits of the settlement is shown by the esteem in which he was held by the south Russian authorities and by the government at Petersburg. The governor of New Russia and Besserabia, Count Vorontsov, was a frequent guest at Cornies' home and sought his advice on problems concerning agriculture and cattle-breeding. Ten years before his death the Committee of Scholars of the Department of Crownlands asked him to become an honorary member. Here also Cornies did exemplary work; he sent countless reports and charts regarding his work to the Committee and stimulated and advised those in authority at Petersburg.

The excavations which he attempted in the steppes indicated his scientific leanings. He had long been intrigued by the *Kurgans*, (hills) that had apparently been heaped up hundreds of years ago. Cornies had them excavated and sent his findings with detailed reports to the Committee of Scholars.

The officials of Russia have shown their appreciation of the great Mennonite pioneer by various honors. In 1825 Czar Alexander I, as well as the Crown Prince, visited him. In 1837 he was received by Czar Nicholas I at Simferopol who thanked him most heartily for his efforts to settle the Nogais. He refused ranks and medals which were offered him at various occasions but accepted a simple golden commemorative medal.

Society for Christian Education

To Cornies it seemed that particularly the educational system of his conservative fellow countrymen was in need of reform. In 1818 he founded the Society for Christian Education, which built its first secondary school in Orloff in 1820. He also began a library and created a reading circle.

Until 1843 the schools of these immigrants were church schools. Trained teachers were not to be had, but the farmers themselves instructed their children in the schools. That year the schools were ordered to be subordinate to the Society for Christian Education (that is, to Cornies) in collaboration with the religious leaders. Cornies immediately divided the Molotschna settlement into six school districts; he planned for the improvement of the school buildings, dismissed a number of the most incompetent teachers, and insisted upon regular school attendance of the children. Cornies was the first to insist upon compulsory attendance, a policy which was finally carried out by his successor Philip Wiebe.

The curriculum itself, however, was in need of a thorough-going-reform. "Worldly" textbooks had, until then, not been tolerated in the schools. The only sources of instruction were the Bible, catechism, and hymn book. There was no place in the curriculum for either history or geography. Farmer-teachers thought of education as mere memorization. The first thing Cornies did was to draw up "87 rules about instruction and treatment of school children." These rules reveal how

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Mennonite homestead in South Russia showing architectural style dating back to Prussia and Holland.

CULTURAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE CHORTITZA MENNONITES

BY WALTER KUHN

IN contrast to the other foreign groups that settled in Southern Russia toward the close of the eighteenth century, the Mennonites came in closed communities, their movements well-planned in advance. Before they determined upon emigration, they sent two authorized deputies to the court of the Czar and submitted the conditions under which they desired to settle on the Russian lands. These were: closed communities, consisting of farms of 180 acres each, freedom of religion and complete separation of church and state, freedom from both military service and the oath.

In one instance only were they dissatisfied with the conditions offered them. They would have preferred to settle again on lowlands such as they had possessed in the Vistula Delta; such lands, however, could not be found in Russia. They had to settle in the steppes, a region with whose climatic and agricultural conditions they were thoroughly unfamiliar. Here, in 1789, they founded the settlement of Chortitza on the Dnieper River, about 45 miles south of Ekaterinoslav (Dniepropetrovsk).

Settling in fifteen villages, 346 families had arrived prior to 1796. Together, these constituted the "Old Colony," so-called to distinguish it from the Mennonite "New Colony" or Molotschna settlement, founded in 1803 farther east on the Molotschna River.

Wherever possible the villages were arranged as in the former homeland. The villages were named in memory of those they had left: Einlage, Neuendorf, Schoenhorst, Schoenwiese, Baerwalde, and Osterwick—these had been familiar village names in the Danzig area and were now used in the Old Colony. Later these names were duplicated in the daughter colonies in East Russia, in Siberia, in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Paraguay, etc. The architectural style of the farms was also patterned after the old style in Prussia. Even in 1942, a great many large wooden blockhouses, that could not be distinguished from those in the Vistula Delta, were still standing. Since wood was extremely scarce in the steppes, building made slow progress.

Above all, the closely-knit church organization was preserved, according to the motto: "One for all, and all for one." This was followed not only in religious matters, but also in economic affairs. From the beginning of the settlement mutual insurance was established after

the pattern of the former *Brandkasse;* a fund for the care of children who were wards of society was also set aside, according to the pattern of the *Waisenkasse.*

In economic affairs, the Mennonites, even as many other settlers in Russia, needed several decades of experience fully to acquaint themselves with the strange conditions there. Then, however, the Mennonites, because of their thoroughness, their industriousness, and their religiously motivated organization, were able to capitalize on the advantages their new land offered. They thus became the leaders of all the colonists and of the entire South Russian agricultural development. The unusual fertility of the black, loamy soil and its adaptability for the growing of grain crops in spite of the scarcity of rain, had not been commonly known. The open steppes seemed to lend themselves most naturally to sheep-farming. With the aid of the Russian authorities the Mennonites secured a herd of Merino sheep from Spain. Sheep-farming was followed not only by the individual farmers, but also by the community on its communal lands. Through purchase of breeding stock and even of entire herds, non-Mennonite colonists also adopted sheep-farming. Presently South Russia became the chief source of wool for the European textile industry, holding a similar position to that which Australia occupies today.

The rapid industrialization of Europe toward the middle of the nineteenth century and the increasing demand for grain laid the basis for the extension of grain-farming in the Russian steppes. This new development called for the discovery of the most suitable varieties of grain as well as the extensive use of agricultural machinery; in both of these the Mennonites showed their leadership. At first they imported agricultural machinery from Germany; soon however, they provided these through their own industry. In the Chortitza colony as early as 1853, a poor watchmaker, Peter Lepp, founded the first factory for the production of agricultural machinery. In 1888 there were eight such factories, in 1908 there were sixteen. The Mennonite plows and wagons, threshers and mowers, cleaning mills, and even steam engines not only found ready acceptance among the German colonists, but were also used extensively by the Russian aristocracy and farmers. The use of steam power soon gave the Chortitza Mennonites a commanding position in the expanding grain- and milling-industry of South Russia. They made similar progress in establishing beer-distilleries, starch factories, tileyards, etc.

As a result of their thoroughness and their well-planned industry, the Mennonites prospered to the extent that they were able to enlarge their settlements. The older villages were rapidly being filled; the remaining lands placed at the disposition of the settlers by the Russian government had been divided among the group. Whereas the original settlement numbered only about 1,500, the population increased to a total of 4,008 in 1825; and to 12,000 in 1859. At this time only a third lived on land they owned while the rest were landless.

In 1861 the Chortitza settlement founded its first

The Lepp and Wallmann implement factory at Chortitza. At extreme right, Niebuhr mill.

Kornelius Hildebrand in his workshop, out of which grew the Hildebrand and Priess agricultural implement factory at Chortitza, worth half-million ruble and employing nearly 200 people.

daughter colony on a government lease. Since 1870, the colony followed a planned program of purchasing land, at first in South Russia, then farther east extending even to Siberia. In most cases the land was purchased by the settlement, with the income of the communal grazing lands and then parceled out to the younger families of the colony. The new colonies also set aside a tract of land which was not divided into farms but which was held in common ownership by the colony and sub-leased in order to provide means for the purchase of more land for the establishment of further settlements. In addition to the expansion of the Mennonites in Russia itself were the emigrations to America in 1874 and after.

Whereas the Mennonites of the Chortitza and Molotschna settlements were originally given 280,000 acres of land by the Russian government at the time of their immigration, they possessed 3,750,000 acres in 1914, a land area the size of the state of Connecticut. The descendents of the Old Colony, scattered over European and Asiatic Russia now numbered 60,000—an increase of 4,000 per cent in 118 years.

The year 1871 proved to be a time of great significance when events of national importance affected the life of the Russian Mennonites. In that year special privileges formerly granted the colonists were abolished in conformity with the official Russianization program. Regarded as of particular danger to the Mennonites was the limitation of their freedom from military service. They were now required to do non-combatant service; but even that was not satisfactory, since it would constitute service under the jurisdiction of the military. After prolonged negotiations, the Mennonites were given the privilege of four-year alternative service in a program of independent, self-supported forestry service. The Mennonites had already distinguished themselves in establishing forests in the barren steppes; now they were given the task of developing this activity on a larger scale for the common welfare. This requirement placed a great financial burden upon the Mennonite churches: annually they were required to provide 300,000 ruble ($153,000) for the support of their men in the forestry service.

The cessation of the former privileges proved to be so disturbing to a large portion of the Mennonites that they no longer entrusted their future to the graces of the Russian state. They determined upon emigration, even as their forefathers had done twice; this time, however, to the United States and Canada. Even as they had been masters in bringing the steppes under cultivation, they now became pioneers in opening up the prairies. As

gift to the new world they brought along all the colonizing skills which their fathers had developed in Russia.

Those remaining in Russia enjoyed several generations of economic and cultural progress. At the eve of the first World War the Mennonites constituted a people conscious of its position and leadership in the rural economy of the land. Their settlements had remained homogeneously Mennonite; non-Mennonites, Russians, and Ukrainians lived among them only as farm hands, shepherds, factory workers, and migratory farm laborers. This service for the Mennonites proved to be a thorough occupational training for the more backward, needy people of the Ukraine; they learned new methods in farming and the construction trades as well as new skills and appreciations in housekeeping and home crafts.

Throughout, an uncompromising separation of the Mennonites from the non-Mennonites was maintained. While the majority of the Slavs were illiterate, there was no illiteracy among the Mennonites. The Russian language was used as the medium of official and commercial communication and, since 1886, was required in the schools of the colonists. Never did the Russian language gain entry into the family circle. In the census of 1897, it was found that less than 1 per cent of all Mennonites of Russia used Russian as their mother-tongue.

On the other hand, the close association of the Mennonites with their brethren in Germany, Holland, and America remained active and was continually refreshed through migration, exchange of correspondence, and through various Mennonite periodicals. Some of the ministers gained their education in other countries and from America and Germany there came spiritual stimulations.

A precipitous blow was struck at this significant cultural development by the Revolution of 1917 and the further progress of the Soviet system. Thus a new chapter began in the story of Mennonitism in Russia which ended with its complete destruction.

JOHANN CORNIES

(Continued from page 34)

clearly he recognized the weaknesses of the schools and with how much understandng and vision he sought to improve them.

Unfortunately, Cornies was able to serve as chairman of the Society for Christian Education for only five years (1843-1848). In spite of that, his long-range work constituted a real reform. It was Cornies who laid the foundation for the later development of the school system of the Mennonites in Russia. A year before his death the Department of Crownlands placed the Chortitza settlement under his control also.

The Man

That Cornies was able to carry through his mighty reforms in spite of great opposition was due largely to the fact that as representative of the authorities, he was endued with almost limitless powers. When it served his purpose, he could ruthlessly carry his will through.

Because of his self-sacrificing, successful efforts, and his upright dealings, Cornies won many friends in spite of violent religious opposition, and these friends were among the better people of Mennonitism. He knew personally practically every person. A warm feeling of good will and a superb calmness marked his relationships with people. He possessed an unsurpassed speaking ability and excelled in the art of story telling.

In spite of his great wealth and influence Cornies remained a plain Mennonite farmer. He also retained the use of the Low German mother tongue, in the family as well as in association with his fellow settlers.

February 29, 1848, he fell ill with quinsy and two weeks later, on March 13, he died at the early age of 59 years. A huge crowd attended his funeral among which were many Ukrainians, Russians, Nogais, Molokans, and Tatars. His people placed a memorial for him in the cemetery at Orloff which, according to the wishes of the deceased, was a broken marble column.

Brickyard of Isaac Suderman, near Ekaterinoslav, one of the many brickyards operated by Mennonites.

Auf dem Baschtan.

(Fortsetzung von Seite 29)

Stengel? Es prangt in schönstem Grün, an ihm ist nichts, aus dem man auf ein baldiges Verdorren schließen könnte.

Berend kratzt sich hinter den Ohren. Das ist so zu verstehen: die Arbuse ist grün, so sicher wie was, und sie darf es doch nicht sein, wo heute doch Sonntag ist und alles sonst so nett hier herum, und wo einem doch schon das Wasser im Munde zusammenläuft. Hmmm.—

„Wir pflücken sie ab, Berend, soll ich?"

Berend steht noch immer unschlüssig da. Es gibt noch ein Erkennungszeichen für reife Arbusen, das letzte. Man greift nicht gerne dazu. Hans weiß, daß Berend es jetzt in Erwägung hat.

„Drück man, Berend!"

Der seufzt leise, als ob er sich erst entschuldigen müßte. Aber sie haben nun doch schon alles versucht, und wenn sie, die Arbuse, sich trotz allem hartnäckig darauf versteift, daß sie nicht reif ist, ja dann wäscht er eben seine Hände in Unschuld.—So kniet er denn vor der Widerspenstigen nieder, nimmt sie zwischen die Handteller, legt sein Ohr nahe daran und beginnt langsam zu pressen. Auch Hans hat sich auf die Knie niedergelassen, stützt beide Hände auf die Erde und legt den Kopf schief. Berend drückt. Beide halten den Atem an. —Nichts, aber auch gar nichts knistert da drinnen.—

„Na, dann können wir sie jetzt ruhig abpflücken, die ist nun doch schon verdorben," sagt Hans altklug und erhebt sich von der Erde. Die Entscheidung ist gefallen. Erleichtert atmen beide auf.

Die Brüder setzen sich nun auf den Rain ins Gras, die Füße in der tiefen Furche. So sitzt es sich ganz bequem. Die Arbuse liegt zwischen ihnen. Mit den Taschenmesser schneidet Berend sie an. Sie reißt nicht von Ende bis Ende auf, wie das bei reifen oft geschieht, bei solchen, deren Ueberfülle an süßem Saft die Schale ohnehin zu sprengen droht. Auch geht die Messerklinge nicht glatt durch das „Fleisch." Das sind alles noch immer schlimme Anzeichen. Aber dann hält Berend die erste Schnitte in der Hand.

„Eine weißfleischige!" sagt Hans und will mit einer Falschauslegung die Illusion retten. Aber Berend wendet ihm schmunzelnd die andere Seite der Schnitte zu. Und wahrhaftig: dort, wo die Kerne sitzen, zeigt sich verschämt der erste Hauch einer kommenden Röte.

„Doch eine rote! Siehst, Berend, sagte ich nicht, sie sei reif!" triumphiert Hans, „auf mich kannst du dich verlassen!" Er spuckt aus zur Bekräftigung und auch so, denn er hat im Munde schon viel zu viel Wasser von dem langen Warten.

Dann essen sie. Die Knie weit auseinandergestellt, die Finger gespreizt, so sitzen sie und putzen eine Schnitte nach der andern weg, die Samenkerne weit von sich spuckend. — Nein, wie die schmeckt! Viel besser als eine wirklich reife es in zwei Wochen wird. Als sie fertig sind, setzt Hans sich an Berends andere Seite, dort wo dessen Schalen liegen. Die geht Hans nun noch einmal durch, denn Berend hat da viel zu viel „Rotes" dran gelassen. Dann machen sie ein Loch in dem weichen Ackerboden, tun die Schalen da hinein und scharen Erde darüber. Es sieht nicht gut aus, wenn sich Arbusenschalen am Rain herumliegen. Vater liebt das nicht.

„Und jetzt wollen wir einmal auf die Schanze gehen und noch etwas sitzen," sagt Berend.

★

Dort, wo die Kartoffeln anfangen, ist ein Kurgan. Nicht von den großen einer, aber doch hoch genug, um von dort aus etwas mehr von der Umgebung sehen zu können. Da setzen sie sich und lassen schweigend ihren Blick über die Felder weg in die Weite schweifen.

Da liegt es vor ihnen, ihr Dorf, wie verloren in der weiten Steppe. Das Dorf, das seine Gründer einmal Hochfeld genannt. Das haben sie gut getroffen mit dem Namen. Es liegt hoch, nach allen Seiten hin laufen die Frühlingswasser ab. Hochfeld ist das jüngste Dorf der jungen Kolonie und ist erst dreißig Jahre alt. Und sein Land gehört schon nicht zu dem Siedlungsplan, den die Große Katharina einmal den deutschen Kolonisten zur Besiedelung anwies. Es wurde vielmehr durch die Chortitzer Mutterkolonie frei erworben von den russischen Gutsbesitzern . . Nach dem einen davon hat man das Dorf später auch auf Morosowo unbenannt, denn es sollte doch mit einmal alles russisch werden. Dann haben die Hochfelder dem Pan Morosow noch auf eigene Faust mehr Land abgekauft. Erst einmal, dann noch einmal, und dann war sein Land alle . . . . . (Aus **Verloren in der Steppe,** Fünfter Teil; noch nicht veröffentlicht.)

* * * *

A THRILLING STORY

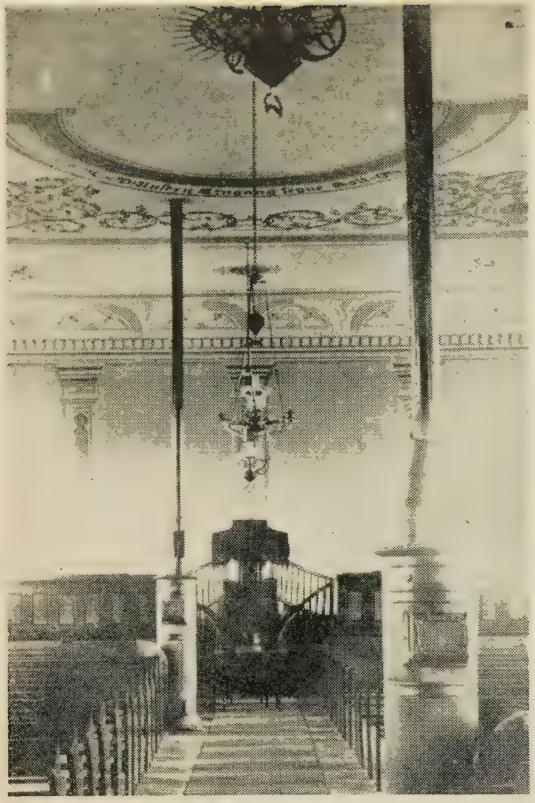
(Continued from page 28)

hard and lived in peace and contentment with their small family for six months. Jacob fashioned a spinning-wheel for Anna's use and soon was kept busy by the various Schardau housewives who requested similar spinning-wheels. For the local blacksmith who manufactured plows, Jacob supplied the necessary wooden wheels. In the spring they moved to the edge of Schardau and became *Anwohner* having by now sold their team of horses and owning instead, two cows, a calf, some chickens, and a plot of barley.

Meanwhile the process of becoming a Russian citizen was set in motion. A few months after arriving, Jacob in company with *Lehrer* Jacob Janzen and two other newcomers from Prussia, drove to Halbstadt in response to the order from the *Gebietsamt* (district government) delivered their passports and in turn received permits to remain in Russia for a specified time.

In the late spring, newly arrived craftsmen, Jacob among them, were summoned by the *Landswirtschaftlicher Verein* (Agricultural Association), through Johann Cornies to appear at the *Musterwirtschaft* (model farm)

(Concluded on page 44)



Two views of Mennonite Church, Schoensee, Molotschna, of which Alexander Ediger was the last minister.

Long Ago

IT happened long, long ago, about a hundred and fifty years back in our history. Imagine the boundless steppes of southern Russia, slightly rolling, covered with grass so high that the wind sweeping over it formed waves like the waves of the ocean. Wild animals roamed over the immense plains and a half-barbaric, nomadic people, with their herds of sheep, cattle and horses, made this their home.

Then a change. Another wandering people came to the steppes; this time not a barbaric, nomadic tribe, but thrifty, hard-working farmers from the mouth of the Vistula-River—people who had only one desire: to settle down and work and worship God as their conscience taught them. These were our Mennonite forefathers from the country around Danzig, then belonging to Prussia. In two great groups they came: the first settling on the banks of the mighty Dnieper, the second a little later on the banks of the small Molotschna River. The latter group of Mennonites, or rather, the work they created, will be the subject of this short article.

Imagine once more the same place mentioned at the beginning, about a hundred years later, at the end of the nineteenth or the beginning of the twentieth century. Sixty villages had gradually sprung up from the virgin soil chiefly along the Molotschna and its tributaries, the Kurushan and the Jushanlee—villages well planned, clean, beautiful—the like of which did not exist the world over. During a hundred years these simple, hardworking, God-fearing people had virtually changed the wilderness into a paradise.

Most villages had twenty *Wirtschaften* or homesteads lying on either side of a wide, tree-planted village street. The large tile-covered brick houses were surrounded by beautiful flower-and fruit gardens; everything was immaculate. Some villages had large commercial orchards with a great variety of fruit. In the center of every village stood the substantially built schoolhouse

J. Hoeppner, one of delegates who led the Mennonites from Prussia to Russia, was buried on Chortitza Island where this monument was erected in his honor.

AR AWAY

The schools were exceptionally good, the teachers being trained in Mennonite normal schools or "pedagogical" schools as they were called. After leaving the village school, which offered a six years' course, the children had a fairly good knowledge of two languages—German and Russian. There never had been any illiteracy among the Mennonites. The so-called *Zentralschulen* or secondary schools, provided for more advanced education.

The schools were second only to the churches, situated in the larger villages, and at first built in the old Mennonite—but later in a more modern style. Beyond the village stretched endless fields of golden grain. This was, indeed, one of the richest breadbaskets of the world.

So, for more than a century, these people lived their simple and pious lives, little concerned about what happened in the great world around them. Then, once more, everything changed. Suddenly, almost without warning, one terrible disaster followed another. Like a frightful hurricane these calamities swept through the hitherto quiet villages and left ruin and destruction in their wake. War, revolution, anarchy, hunger, and disease gathered their ghastly harvest. Because Mennonites held with tenacity to their religious convictions and practices, they suffered far more than any other group of the population. A very large part of the Mennonite population perished from violence, hunger, and disease. Many left Russia and were scattered to the four corners of the earth. But still a great part remained in Russia. The path of these who could not escape, has ever since been a virtual Golgotha.

After the terrors of the last war, we now know, many of the villages completely vanished from the face of the earth. But their memory still lives in the hearts of the older generation, in the hearts of those who were born there, spent the carefree years of their childhood there, and who called this earthly paradise their home, sweet home—so long, long ago.

Alexander Ediger and family. He died in exile.

Left—The "home, sweet home" many still remember.

Upon arrival at Chortitza more than 150 years ago, Mennonites found this oak, over 1,000 years old. It was still standing when they were forced to leave, 1943.

A typical scene at a depot after World War I when thousands of Mennonites left their homes.

FROM RUSSIA TO CANADA -- TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

BY D. D. REMPEL

It is early in the summer of 1923. The villages of the Chortitza Colony are serene and peaceful. Four times since the outbreak of the Revolution this region had been the theatre of war, but now the evidences of this civil strife have practically disappeared. The death wave is a thing of the past. The revival from the effects of the famine is quite perceptible. Yet "serene" describes only the external appearances. If one observes the situation within the villages one finds unrest. The primary topic of conversation is the prospective emigration. Several thousand from the old Colony and the surrounding daughter colonies have indicated their desire to migrate. Their names are at the head of the lists.

Even during the great war with Germany, when our people were suddenly regarded as enemies of the land which for a hundred years had been their home, their devotion to Russia suffered a great disillusionment. Yet they cherished a hope for better days. When, however, the Bolsheviks seized power, and we were in danger of losing not only our material goods, but also stood in peril of forfeiting our most cherished possession—the heritage of our fathers—the decision to search for a new home was readily accepted. A commission to study this problem was sent to the Western Hemisphere; Canada was the goal of our plans. However, the doors of Canada were closed to us. New Zealand, Paraguay, Brazil, and Mexico were also taken into consideration.

In the meantime, the Liberals came to power in Canada. The Liberals had always been friendly toward the Mennonites and thus our leaders soon succeeded in influencing the government to repeal the "Orders in Council" denying our entrance. The Canadian Pacific Railroad declared its readiness to extend credit to our people for the costs of transportation. Such a move was, no doubt, without precedent in the history of this concern. From the Canadian side there was now no obstacle to the migration. Second only to our Heavenly Father, we owe a debt of gratitude for the efforts of the then president of the Board of Colonization, Elder David Toews, and the brethren Gerhard Ens and A. A. Friesen.

Another hindrance, perhaps even the greatest obstacle, remained to be overcome. The Soviet government stubbornly refused to grant its approval to the emigration project. Our spokesman with the Russian officials was B. B. Janz who did not fail in this crises, either in endurance or in tenacity. It is said of him that as soon as he was shown out of one door, he would at once enter another. His efforts, however, remained unsuccessful.

Government officials also tried to persuade the people to give up the thought of emigration. The attention of the people was directed to the N. E. P. ("New Economic Policy") which had recently been introduced and under which the economic situation would hastily resolve itself, bringing again an era of prosperity. This apparent departure from Bolschevik principles was a necessary decree that was to save the nation from bankruptcy. The government treasury had been depleted by foolish management in the early years of the Revolution. Russia had not yet gained recognition from other nations, and no friendly democracy came to its rescue with trade agreements and financial assistance. The rural economy experienced a marked revival under the N. E. P. As a consequence, many gave up their decision to migrate and did not attach their name to the list of emmigrant applications. Others, who had already done so, removed their names. Most of them, however, remained firm in their original decision and grew more and more impatient. In June, J. P. Klassen, at present professor of art at Bluffton College, was sent to Kharkov to seek ways of hastening matters related to emigration.

The extent to which the Bolscheviks, despite the N. E. P., were unwilling to compromise in respect to communistic doctrine was observed particularly by the village teachers. The government had arranged a summer course for our teachers. Every morning we all gathered in the spacious quarters of the new teacher's training school in Chortitza. D. H. Epp, at present editor of the *Bote*, was appointed as leader although the Commissariat for Schools had also appointed two membebrs of the Communist party whose real duties, no doubt, were to see that the school was "properly" conducted. Comrade F., a friendly youth lately come from Germany, was one of the Communists. He seemed rather happy in our midst and no one took him very seriously. With Comrade Z., it was quite different. At the first glance we could see she was a veteran of the Communist Party. Everybody was cautious when she was about. These workers and other lecturers sent to us did their best to aquaint us with the doctrines of Communism and to secure our adherance to those ideas. We listened attentively to the lectures and even took part in the discussions. However, those of us who had given notice of our intention to emigrate, waited patiently for a report from J. P. Klassen.

Then one day the word was passed along: A dispatch had been received from Klassen stating that approval had been secured for the first three thousand on the lists. They were to leave in groups of a thousand each in two-week intervals. The first group was to be ready to begin the journey in two weeks. The teachers who were included in the first group remained absent from further class sessions; included in this group was our leader. The rest of us wanted to attend all the sessions, even though the school was to close in a few days; we were also anxious to avoid a disturbance. I shall never forget the look of amazement of our party workers the following morning when they learned of the state of affairs. Comrade Z. at once delivered a vehement tirade, concluding in somewhat the following words! "Just proceed to America! There the capitalists will soon enslave you and in a few years you will want to come back, but the doors will then be closed to you." The speech was a dreadful warning but nobody took it very seriously.

The time of departure was approaching. Feverishly the necessary preparations for the journey were made. A large group of the first thousand were from Osterwick, one of the largest villages of the Old Colony; almost a third of the population of this village migrated at one time. On a certain day the chattel property of the migrants was sold at public auction. All the saleable items had been brought to the large yard of the *Zentralschule*. Buyers and spectators assembled from near and far until the mass of people must have numbered several thousand. Nevertheless, everything proceeded in orderly fashion.

On a beautiful summer morning the special train was at the Chortitza depot ready for the departure. The hour of farewell from the remaining friends and loved ones had come. From twenty-five to thirty persons with all their baggage had to crowd into one freight car. A journey of this nature did not promise many conveniences. But who was now concerned about comforts? Finally, we felt, we were on our way to a land where freedom beckoned. Without incident the train finally reached the boundary and passed it. Only now did the passengers breathe easier. In Latvia the final test had to be passed—the Canadian health inspection. Those who were put back and their immediate families, numbering all told about two hunderd, were taken to a temporary detention camp at Lechfeld, Germany. However, with few exceptions, these and those who were later detained, all arrived in Canada. Those who were found

In the yard of the century-old *Zentralschule* they sold their cherished belongings for a pittance.

Leaving Russia through the Red Gate of the Iron Curtain they could breathe easier and look forward to freedom.

to be in good health continued the journey. On July 17, 1923, the C. P. R. steamer, "Empress of France," docked at the pier in Quebec with some eight hundred passengers on board. The immigration movement of some twenty thousand Russian Mennonites to Canada had begun.

Our family came with the third group. Our parents were obliged to spend several months in the Lechfeld camp while the rest of us continued on our way and landed without incident in Quebec. As we left the ship and entered the Immigration Hall, we were pleasantly surprised as a woman in the uniform of the Salvation Army gave each of us a copy of the Gospel of John. How different this was from the crude posters we had so often seen in Russia which proclaimed that religion was the opium of the people.

As our train carried us through the countryside and we saw at first only rocks, small forests, and lakes we almost began to doubt whether this was really the promised land of Canada where there was to be so much cheap land suitable for grain-farming. We soon reminded ourselves that such lands as we viewed from the window of our train would never have appealed to a Mennonite settler. However, the scene was to change. Scon our train rolled through the endless grain-fields of Manitoba. The farmers in our group now looked upon the fields with joy.

Today we are especially thankful to our heavenly father that we are able to contribute something toward helping in bringing our brethren of Europe, who have become homeless and have suffered great trials because of the war and its aftermath, to this great continent.

* * * *

A THRILLING STORY

(Continued from page 39)

at Jushanlee. At the meeting, plans were discussed for the establishment of a permanent village of craftsmen. The *Verein* was interested in Jacob as a cabinetmaker, a profession which he acquired through apprenticeship to Heinrich Foth of Nieder Gruppe, Prussia, when a young man of nineteen. A third summons, coming almost immediately after, asked Jacob to appear at Orloff. An extensive questionnaire was now required of each craftsman, covering in great detail his personal and professional life.

In the fall of 1841, two years after arriving in Russia, Jacob and Anna moved to the neighboring village of Rudnerweide. At long last they became permanent settlers, solid citizens rooted in God's good earth enjoying the privileges and obligations of the government which gave them exemption from military service—a heritage well worth a long and dangerous journey to a distant land.

THE ETHNIC ORIGIN OF THE MENNONITES FROM RUSSIA

BY CORNELIUS KRAHN

MOST of the Mennonites came to Russia by way of migration from the Danzig area, starting in 1788 and coming to a climax early in the eighteenth century. Just as the Mennonites of Russia never became an integral part of the Russian civilization and nation, but retained a religio-cultural pattern of their own, so also had they never become an integral part of the Prussian civilization. In fact, their migration to the barren steppes of the Ukaine was a direct protest against the Prussianization of the territory under and after Fredrick II. What then was the ethnic and religio-cultural background of the Mennonites of Prussia prior to their coming to Russia?

Mennonites in general are either of Swiss or Dutch ethnic origin. The origin of the Mennonites parallels the Reformation of the sixteenth century. The cradle of the Mennonites or the Anabaptist movement, is to be found in Switzerland from where it reached Holland by 1530. The Anabaptist movement developed both within and extending beyond these two countries in a manner quite independently from each other. The Mennonites spreading into South Germany, Alsace-Lorraine, and Pennsylvania were of Swiss background. The Mennonites spreading from the Netherlands along the North Sea, and the Baltic coast, then to the Russian steppes were Dutch. How the latter group retained a religio-cultural pattern of its own, will be briefly described in this article.

From Holland to the Danzig Region

In Holland the Reformation made rapid progress. One wing of this movement consisted of the Mennonites, or Anabaptists. The Spanish Catholic rulers of The Netherlands severely persecuted all who deviated from Catholic teaching and practices. Many Dutch Protestants sought refuge in England and the neighboring German provinces. Some went as far as Danzig.

Danzig offered these refugees many opportunities in industries, especially in draining and cultivating the swampy regions along the Vistula River. These thrifty Dutch farmers had for generations developed the skill of wresting the land from the water. The City of Danzig, and even the Polish kings and dukes, eagerly sought these Dutch colonists in spite of their Protestant convictions. With their coming, a new era began for the area along the Vistula River.

Up to 1530, the religious affiliation of the Dutch colonists had not always been very marked or distinct. Soon after that the Anabaptist or Mennonite leanings prevailed. Menno Simons, a native of Holland who joined this movement in 1536, and after whom the movement was finally named, had a hand in the affairs of this region. We definitely know that he spent some time during the year 1549 in the Danzig area, organizing and strengthening the congregations. As a result of this visit Menno Simons wrote a letter to the "Children of God in Prussia" in the Dutch language (Menno Simons, *Vollstaendige Werke,* 1926, Vol. II, pp. 646-651.) Dirk Philips, also from Holland and a close co-worker of Menno Simons, was founder and the first elder of the Mennonite Church in Danzig. The extent and the duration of this relationship between the Dutch Mennonite churches and their daughter churches along the Vistula River will be illustrated later.

Contributions of Dutch Mennonites

The chief reason for admitting Anabaptists to a predominantly Catholic or Lutheran country was their known ability to contribute to the economic welfare of the country. The first contract known to have been granted to Dutch immigrants by the city of Danzig was that given to Hermann van Bommeln and Toennis Florissen, dated March, 1547. In the same year Danzig delegated Philip Fressen ("Froese") to the Netherlands to invite Dutch people to settle and cultivate the waste lands of the Vistula Delta. Studies reveal that these Dutch Mennonite settlers were placed in areas lying below sea level, in order to drain the swamps and build dikes to keep out the water. In official records, these villages and settlements were referred to as Dutch.

These Dutch settlers differed considerably in economic methods and cultural pattern, not only from their Polish but also from their German neighbors. Prior to the Dutch colonization, farmers settled in these regions in compact villages in which each had separate buildings for dwelling place, barn, and sheds. The Mennonites introduced a new method. They settled along the river, each on his own land, building their houses according to the Dutch pattern—placing dwelling, barn, and shed under one roof. This practice was not only maintained by the Mennonites, but was also adopted by others of that area. In Russia the Mennonites settled in villages but retained their architectural pattern, later transplanting this same pattern even to the prairies of he United States and Canada and recently also to the Chaco of South America. The interior arrangement of such a Mennonite house is still as it was in the sixteenth century. Even in our day, the stoves of some Prussian Mennonite homes frequently carried Dutch designs.

Many other publicly acknowledged contributions could be enumerated in this connection, and yet the service of Mennonites to their country was frequently forgotten or overshadowed by the prejudices which were held against them because of their religious views. Often they were expelled from one region after they had accomplished their task, only to be sent into another to pioneer again.

The Dutch Mennonites were hardly ever admitted to the cities which of necessity made them a rural population. They were not citizens nor given the privileges of citizens. Most of the rights they received were granted to them through special "privileges" which could be retracted at any time.

The Religio-Cultural Background

Along the Vistula Delta the Dutch Mennonites were surrounded mainly by people of Polish Catholic or German Lutheran background. As has been pointed out, the Mennonites had their own national and cultural background. Their growth cannot be attributed to proselyting activities among their neighbors, but consisted rather of a natural growth in a homogeneous religio-cultural body. This can be substantiated by the facts revealed in studying Mennonite family names. During the first centuries, intermarriage with other than Dutch Mennonite neighbors was almost impossible, since membership in the Mennonite church was officially denied to non-Mennonites. The few that did occasionally join went to Holland to join the Mennonite church there and thus by-pass the law.

We have already pointed out that they brought with them distinct economic practices which they retained and developed. Even in legal matters something like a *mores Hollandorum* developed. The educational system of the Dutch Mennonites was far above the average of the surrounding communities. In it we find some of the roots that set them apart as a community and through which they retained their unique characteristics for centuries. They had a very strongly developed mutual-aid system which gave each member a feeling of security and of belonging to a brotherhood. These are some of the factors which enabled them to retain the Dutch language and culture in a more or less pure form for more than two centuries.

The main source for the distinctiveness of the Dutch Mennonites from the Poles and Germans surrounding them lies in their basic religious tenets. These were and still are the primary cause for their migrations from country to country. Their religion was also the chief reason for their maintenance of contact with their homeland and their delayed adjustment to their new environment. Their chief religious concern since the founding of the brotherhood was the attempt to establish something like a miniature Kingdom of God on earth and to preserve it without spot or wrinkle for the returning Lord, the head of the church. Whenever they saw their congregations threatened by the blemishes and spots of the surrounding world or civilization, they would again resume their journey as pilgrims without citizenship in this world, as citizens of a future world which they were seeking.

Contacts With the Dutch Homeland

The practice of calling ministers from the homeland was demonstrated in the cases of Menno Simons and Dirk Philips. This was continued for many generations. For example, the Dutch elder, H. B. Hulshoff, paid an extensive visit to the Mennonite congregations of Prussia and Poland as late as 1719. Young men frequently went to Holland to further their education and there was much mutual visiting among relatives.

The devotional and other literature was printed mostly in Holland in the Dutch language, the most important being the writings of Menno Simons, Dirk Philips, and other leaders; the Martyrs Mirror, confessions of faith, and other doctrinal and devotional literature. The Mennonites of Prussia depended almost entirely on their homeland for their religious and cultural resources. Some of these books were published in Danzig in the Dutch language. Thus, up to the middle of the eighteenth century the language and culture of the Mennonites in Prussia were Dutch. This is not surprising because of the above-mentioned characteristics of the Mennonite tenets, and also since even today Mennonites the world-over rely to a large extent on Dutch Mennonite religious literature, albeit in translation.

The transition from the Dutch to the Low German spoken in the surrounding communities in daily life and to the High German used in worship and polite intercourse occurred during the second half of the eighteenth century. That this happened at the time of the partitioning of Poland in 1772 which made most of the Mennonite communities Prussian, and that soon thereafter the first migrations to Russia took place (1788) is not accidental. The political and cultural changes effected the religious beliefs and practices of the Mennonites to such a degree that they were willing to give up their cherished homes and venture into an unknown future in a foreign land.

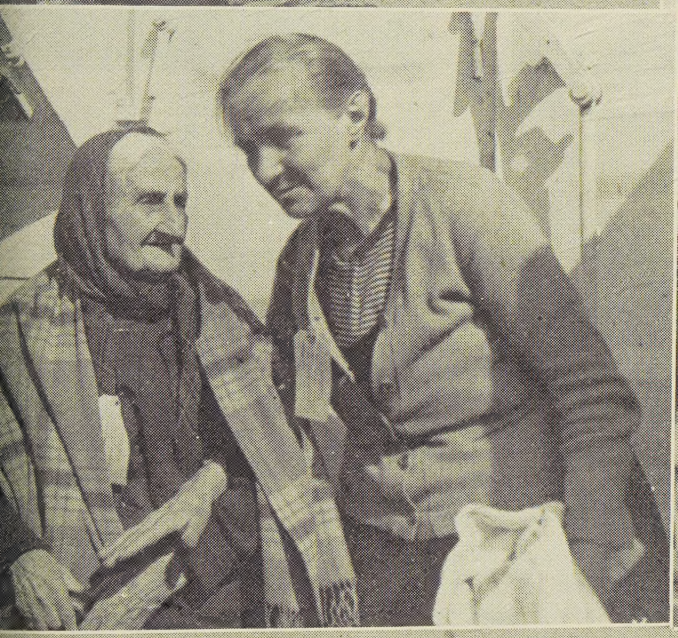
Prussianization and Migration to Russia

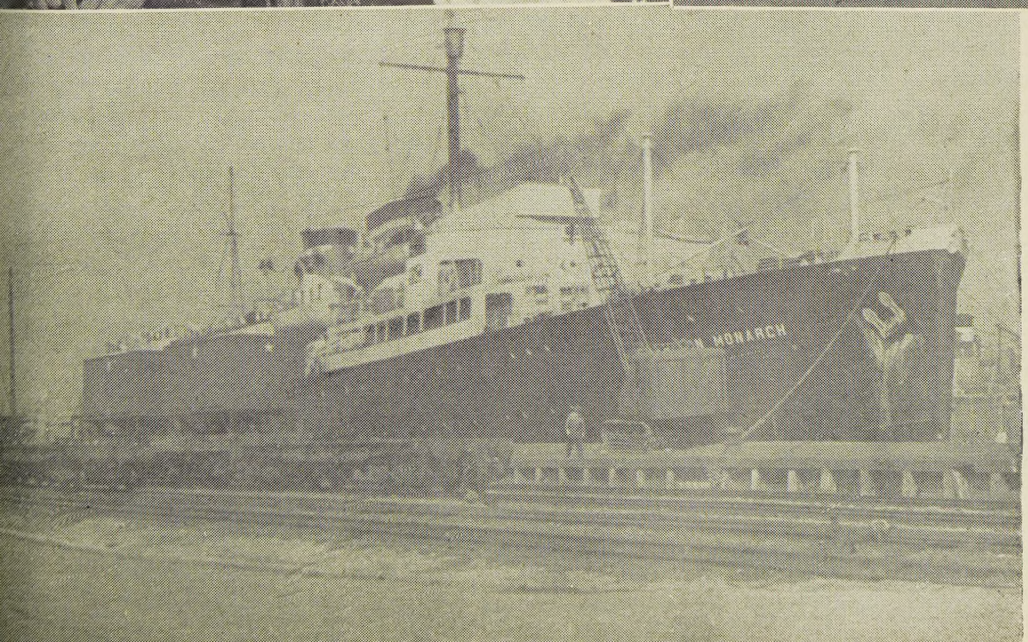
The early Mennonites attempting seriously to establish a miniature Kingdom of God in the Danzig area found that the Dutch culture furnished a welcome barrier between themselves and the "world" around them. This barrier could, however, not be maintained under the then prevailing conditions as had been the case in the Polish environment. When the Prussianization process under and after Frederick II set in, many Mennonites became alarmed. They saw therein a real threat to the essence of their beliefs. They feared they would not be able to maintain their principles and practices and would lose their identity and integrity by becoming a part of the "world," or the encroaching Prussian civilization. In this total picture the problem of nonresistance was vital, but was only one issue.

Thus when Catherine the Great of Russia offered the Mennonites all the freedoms and rights they asked for, they chose to give up their beloved homes of generations which they had conquered many times in many ways. So they continued to pioneer in the steppes for the same reasons that they had done so along the Vistula River, mainly to be able to continue adherence to their religio-

(Continued on page 48)

THIRD GROUP LEAVING FOR SOUTH AMERICA





Hope And Anticipation

S. S. CHARLTON MONARCH LEFT BREMERHAVEN, GERMANY, MAY 16, 1948, WITH 758 MENNONITE REFUGEES SEEKING NEW HOMES IN PARAGUAY. THE GROUP WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MRS. ELFRIEDA DYCK.

Photography by P. J. Dyck

From Contributing Readers . . .

A BROTHERLY HAND

Editors, *Mennonite Life:*

In *Mennonite Life*, April, I read the letter "from one who survived." I should be very glad to know the name and address to send him and his family some food. I know that I never can help him enough, but I'm very glad that I can give the brotherhand to a German Mennonite in the name of Christ, who is the Lord of us all.

Very sincerely yours,
A. M.

Amsterdam, The Netherlands .

Special Announcement!

MENNONITE LIFE will carry a limited number of advertisements on this page in future issues. Inquiries for conditions and rates should be addressed to MENNONITE LIFE, North Newton, Kansas

Menno Simons Portraits

by Arend Hendriks and A. Harder will be available through MENNONITE LIFE as soon as they arrive. Watch annoucements.

MUSIC AMONG MENNONITES IN BRAZIL

Editors, *Mennonite Life:*

Enclosed you will find two photos of my paintings and one of the craftsman, Gustav Janzen. It shows him playing his first homemade 'cello which has received good recognition on the part of the musicians of Blumenau and Curitiba. He has already received orders for several more 'cellos. He has also built several violins which music authorities have pronounced excellent instruments .

Very sincerely yours,
J. J. Janzen

Witmarsum, Brazil.

Gustav Janzen and his homemade cello.

ETHNIC ORIGIN

(Continued from page 47)

cultural pattern. It is true, the wheel of progress could not be turned back. The exchange of the Dutch language for Low German and High German had gone too far to make it retroactive. Some of the characteristics of the early Dutch culture had been altered, but the general pattern was the same. The Dutch Bible, the Dutch *Martyrs Mirror,* and other Dutch books were taken along to the steppes, more as symbols and cherished valuables than for actual use. Even though they were now using the German Bible and other German devotional books, they were still translations from the Dutch, breathing the same spirit and heritage. Besides, the predominant Low German still revealed much of the original Dutch flavor. Later, in 1874, when descendants of these Mennonites moved from the steppes of Russia to the American prairies, some still clung to their cherished Dutch books, bringing them along. Occasionally, they can still be found in the homes. The Bethel College Historical Library recently secured a copy of one of these voluminous Dutch Biestkens Bibles printed during the seventeenth century in Holland and a Dutch *Martyrs Mirror,* also printed at that time in Holland, that had been carried from Holland to Prussia, from Prussia to Russia, and from there to America.

The Mennonites who left Prussia and Danzig in 1788 and later paid a tremendous price to escape the cycle of developments marked by names like Frederick II, Bismark, and Hitler, but it was not in vain. They retained the religio-cultural pattern which they had cherished for generations—yea, for centuries.

The question has been raised as to the ethnic origin of the Mennonites from Russia. What factors determine ethnic origin? Language? Legal and economic patterns? Some characteristics of culture? Or is it the total religio-cultural pattern? How far are we justified in going back to determine the ethnic origin?

If we look at the Mennonites from Russia and consider their language and a few other cultural characteristics, we may feel unjustified in classifying them as of Dutch ethnic origin. On the other hand, what justification do we have in classifying them as of Prussian or German ethnic origin with its present implications? These Mennonites have in their own way been resisting Prussian militarism and some of the characteristics of Prussian civilization, not merely for five or ten years, but ever since the second half of the eighteenth century. For the same reason that they went to Russia 150 years ago, they have in recent years used every avenue of escape from Russia. This record should show clearly that they have a religio-cultural background which does not justify a classification of German ethnic origin with its present implications any more than to classify an American Amishman as German simply because he is retaining certain German cultural characteristics.

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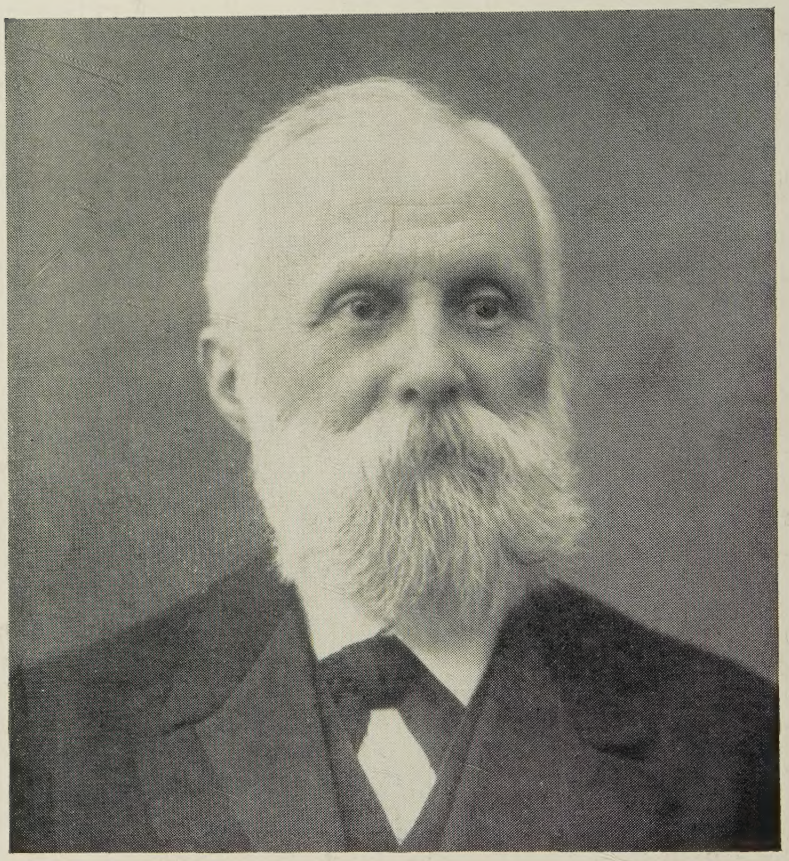

CHRISTIAN NEFF

Initiator and Moderator of Mennonite World Conferences

We are confident in the firm conviction that God has entrusted our brotherhood with a great mission for the future; it is not in vain that He has kept us through persecution and hardships until this day. Even though our number is small, our strength is great if we stand united in one faith and remain loyal to the brotherhood. In word and deed, in prayer and intercession, with heart and hand, let us "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace"

Christian Neff at All-Mennonite Convention, 1913